



**Yearbook**  
**The Historical Society**  
**of**  
**Fairfax County, Virginia**  
  
**Volume 31**  
  
**2007-2008**





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**Editor**  
Paula Elsey

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Front Cover: Photograph of Z.T. Miller as a soldier with the 61st Ohio Volunteer Regiment during the Civil War. (Helen King Boyer Collection, Georgetown University Library.) *Photographic reproduction by David Hagen*

Back Cover: Glass and ceramic artifacts from the 2009 archaeological excavation of the Newgate Tavern site, Centreville, Virginia.  
*Photograph courtesy of the Fairfax County Park Authority*

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❖ IN MEMORIAM ❖

**Paula Hollis Grundset**

**Edgar R. Hon**

**Peyton Sagendorf Moncure**

**Cordelia Grantham Sansone**



# Taverns in Early Northern Virginia

By Debbie Robison

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Taverns, one of those quaint historical subjects that can capture the imagination, attracted a variety of people to enjoy the custom of the house. So much so, that it is not surprising that colorful scenes of tavern life have been portrayed in novels and movies. But what were the taverns in early northern Virginia really like?

According to primary source documents, the taverns of northern Virginia contributed to the reputation that taverns earned in the early days of American history. This article explores various aspects of these past taverns based on what could be gleaned from newspaper advertisements, travel journals, laws, and petitions.

## Tavern Names

There were several terms to describe a place where a traveler could obtain liquor or lodging: ordinary, tavern, house of entertainment, public house, coffee-house, inn, stage office, and tipling house. The term “tavern” began to replace the term “ordinary” following the Revolutionary War. Definitions of the varying services offered at each type of establishment were not readily apparent in the researched source documents; however, the gist may be obtained by reading passages. Philip Vickers Fithian noted in his travel journal in 1774 that Virginia taverns were called ordinaries.<sup>1</sup> The Marquis de Chastellux, traveling in Virginia in the 1780s, also found that Virginia inns were commonly



*Hanover Tavern at Hanover Court House was visited by Marquis de Chastellux.*

Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS)

known as ordinaries whereas in the other American provinces they were known as taverns or public houses.<sup>2</sup>

In the northern part of Virginia, most ordinaries were named after the proprietor, as was the custom with late-18th-century Maryland taverns.<sup>3</sup> Nicholas Cresswell lodged at Mr. Moffit's in Leesburg, often dined at Mosses Ordinary, the only "public House between this place [Leesburg] and Alexandria . . ." and dined at Pursley's Ordinary located on the east side of the Blue Ridge.<sup>4</sup> It is a wonder how the Dry Tavern got its name since, on at least one occasion, the only beverage offered at breakfast was whiskey.<sup>5</sup>

A traveler could lodge at a variety of places in addition to the types of establishments named above. Nicholas Cresswell put up at a Poor House in Whittington's Mill after crossing the Shenandoah River.<sup>6</sup>

Mrs. Ball opened a coffee house and tavern in Alexandria. The coffee house was marketed towards mercantile gentlemen; the tavern, with stabling and a good hostler, to travelers.<sup>7</sup> Nicholas Hannah opened a coffee house in a three-story house in Alexandria in 1786. His advertisement gives clues as to what was available at a coffee house:

Nicholas Hannah informs the gentlemen, merchants and traders, that he has opened a COFFEE-HOUSE in the first three-story house on Fairfax street between King and Prince Streets, with boxes and apartments; and promises good entertainment, to those who favor him with their custom, and makes no doubt of pleasing those who call on him with every article expected at a Coffee-House, and will also take in private boarders on the most reasonable terms.<sup>8</sup>

John Davis rode every Saturday to Alexandria where he read the northern papers at the Coffee room.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Proprietors**

By and large, men owned and operated taverns, particularly those men who could obtain the bond necessary for acquiring the required license. However, women also owned and operated taverns, sometimes after the decease of their spouse. Mrs. Lomax continued to operate the tavern or public house as she termed it, that her husband managed before his death.<sup>10</sup>



*Gadsby's Tavern, Alexandria, Virginia.*  
Library of Congress, HABS

Nicholas Cresswell lodged at several taverns operated by women. He lodged at Mrs. Sorrel's and several weeks later lodged with a landlady he thought to be a thief who bore watching.<sup>11</sup> In Alexandria, Cresswell lodged with Mrs. Hawkins and had his surtout coat stolen. Mrs. Hawkins promised to pay for the coat, but Cresswell doubted this would happen.<sup>12</sup> The dispute escalated when Mrs. Hawkins refused to pay for the coat because he was "a Tory and she won't pay . . . a Farthing."<sup>13</sup> He eventually received ten dollars recompense.<sup>14</sup>

Men were the typical patrons at ordinaries; however, when the Virginia Jockey Club held their races in 1790 the number of accommodations increased over the prior year, particularly for the ladies:

A commodious House, lately built, will be let apart to entertain (only) Ladies and Gentlemen with their families, where the Ladies may attend the Balls without going out.<sup>15</sup>

When Henry Lyles, who owned the Alexandria Inn and Coffee-House, advertised for a Bar-Keeper to work at his tavern, he specifically and in capital letters, requested a man:

Wanted immediately, As a Bar-Keeper, A Genteel young MAN, who is smart, active, and sober, and who can be well recommended. To such a one the most generous wages will be given by HENRY LYLES.<sup>16</sup>

Lyles advertised for travelers and others, though specifically gentlemen, that he had "several convenient private rooms, with fire-places, where gentlemen may be most comfortably accommodated."<sup>17</sup>

### **Tavern Locations**

Ordinaries were located in towns, especially at courthouses, along roads, and at ferry crossings. They were located at distances convenient for stopping for a meal or an evening's lodging. Richard Parkinson noted in his journal that "at the taverns as you go along, there are your appointed places to breakfast, dine, sup, and sleep at."<sup>18</sup> One tavern was situated by itself in the middle of the woods.<sup>19</sup>

William Ward moved from his house on the hill in Alexandria to "his new house on the wharf, every way accommodated for the entertainment of gentlemen and travelers."<sup>20</sup>

Lots near courthouses were prime real estate for taverns.<sup>21</sup> In Leesburg, Alexander McIntyre offered for sale or rent two houses near the courthouse that he felt were well suited for a tavern:

A COMMODIOUS HOUSE, two stories high, a house adjoining it with a billiard table in it, and two vacant lots opposite the said house—it is a corner house near the Court-house, with all conveniences for keeping a grand tavern.<sup>22</sup>

When residents of Fairfax County petitioned the General Assembly of Virginia to remove the courthouse and gaol (jail) to a more central location in the county, they suggested the neighborhood of Price's Ordinary.<sup>23</sup> (This ordinary was located near the intersection of present-day Backlick and Braddock roads, though the courthouse was built at present-day Fairfax City.)

Ordinaries were established at ferry crossings for the convenience of travelers. This location was particularly ideal in winter when ferrymen had to spend a great deal of time clearing ice from frozen waterways. Several ordinaries were located along the Potomac River. Nicholas Cresswell dined at Noland's Ferry on the Potomac River near Leesburg.<sup>24</sup> Phillip Vickers Fithian, after crossing the Potomac from Virginia to Maryland, spent time at a tavern at the ferry.<sup>25</sup> In Alexandria, Richard Robey kept a house of entertainment, where he was set up with "a good Supply of Liquors and other Necessaries for his Line of Business," operated a ferry from Alexandria to Maryland, and offered stableage on a weekly basis.<sup>26</sup> William Hepburn advertised a lot in Alexandria on the wharf on Princess and Union streets as being ideal for a tavern since it was near the ferry landing.<sup>27</sup>

When a law was contemplated to prohibit the importation of spirituous liquors, a rebellious entrepreneur proposed circumventing the law by furnishing a hulk (ship) subdivided into comfortable apartments for gentlemen and supplied with the best spirituous liquors. The hulk would be moored in the Potomac River opposite Alexandria with a boat ready to be hailed for transport.<sup>28</sup>

### **Travel To and From**

Travelers had several options for conveyance between taverns. They



*Newgate Tavern, Centreville, Virginia.*  
Library of Congress, HABS

could travel by horse, foot, stagecoach, carriage, or boat, though managing not to get lost enroute was often a challenge. Roger Chew eased this challenge by offering to let boys and horses to traveling gentlemen as guides and transportation: "The Boys can be well recommended, and are acquainted with most of the Public Roads and Towns in Virginia." Those gentlemen interested in the service could inquire at any of three taverns in Alexandria.<sup>29</sup> In order to travel to Fort Pitt, Nicholas Cresswell hired a horse from Leesburg tavern keeper Mr. Moffit.<sup>30</sup>

Stagecoaches arrived and departed from taverns that had arrangements with the stagecoach lines. The Northern Stages left Mr. Leigh's Bunch of Grapes tavern in Alexandria at 4 o'clock in the morning.<sup>31</sup> William Clark's stage departed on Mondays and Fridays from Annapolis and arrived the same day in Alexandria at Mrs. Lomax's tavern.<sup>32</sup> The stagecoach lines also made arrangements with tavern keepers to dine along the way. Nathaniel Twining's Winter Establishment of the Stages arranged for dinner to be ready at Mr. Ward's in Alexandria at precisely one o'clock.<sup>33</sup>

Packets, such as the sloop *George*, brought travelers to taverns. The Alexandria and Norfolk packet was suitable for the accommodation of passengers and sailed every fortnight between the two towns.<sup>34</sup>

### Marketing of Taverns

Travelers learned of ordinaries through newspaper advertisements and word of mouth. General Washington's steward recommended to a traveler "the inn kept by Mr. Gadsby, an Englishman."

Travelers also learned of ordinaries by locating tavern shields hanging from the building or from a post. A typical advertisement, which includes mention of a sign, follows.

The Subscriber begs leave to inform the Public, that he has opened a TAVERN in the stone house in Leesburg, formerly kept by Mr. Craven Peyton, and known by the name of the Red Lion, which sign he still continues, where he hopes to meet with encouragement, having laid in a sufficient stock of the best liquors, and furnished the said house with every thing necessary to render it a commodious, well regulated and pleasing house of entertainment; and he begs leave to assure those gentlemen who may honor him with their

custom, that every endeavour will be exerted to give general satisfaction, and every favour conferred will be gratefully acknowledged, by their devoted humble servant HENRY M'CABE <sup>35</sup>

Shields were not always used to advertise a tavern as Dr. Johann David Schoepf discovered:

It is not the universal custom in America to hang shields before the inns, but inns may always be identified by the great number of papers and notices with which the walls and doors of these public houses are plastered—and the best inns are in general the most papered. From such announcements the traveler gets a many-sided entertainment, and gains instruction as to where taxes are heavy, where wives have eloped or horses been stolen, and where the new doctor has settled.<sup>36</sup>

The races brought a great amount of custom [business] to taverns. William Lyles, in advertising the rental of the Alexandria Coffee House, noted that:

... a person well qualified will meet with great encouragement by opening the house and stables and being properly prepared before the races, when an uncommon number of company is expected. The great demand for rooms and stables, and the great prices paid on these public occasions, no doubt will produce an early application.<sup>37</sup>

In 1785, an unscrupulous person (or persons) spread false reports that others were closing their taverns. Three proprietors in Alexandria and Leesburg then found it necessary to inform the public through newspaper advertisements in February, March, and May that they did not intend to quit the business.<sup>38</sup> One advertisement read:

Whereas it hath been industriously propagated that I have quit keeping a public house, I beg leave to inform the public, that I have no such intention, but on the contrary have lately furnished my house with the best liquors, &c. for the accommodation of gentlemen, and will kindly thank any who may please to favor me with their custom.<sup>39</sup>

## Events and Uses

# *The Market Square Tavern*

---

JOHN GREEN begs leave to acquaint the Publick that *Williamsburg Taverns & Ordinaries* thanks its old Customers and asks a Continuance of their Custom at its Inn on the *Duke of Gloucester Street* at the east of the old *Publick Magazine*.

The *Tavern* has 11 or 13 very good Lodging Rooms and as he is well provided with the best of Liquors and well understands the Cookery Part, those who frequented the above *Tavern* and others who visit *Williamsburg* during Publick Times may depend upon finding everything to their Satisfaction.

\* \* \* *The* greatest Care will be taken of Ladies and Gentlemen's Servants and Horses, &c.

Library of Congress, Printed Ephemera Collection

Politics were frequently the conversation topic in the evenings at taverns.<sup>40</sup> Nicholas Cresswell, an Englishman investigating Virginia farmland opportunities, was trapped in Virginia during the Revolutionary War. On November 1, 1774, he went to an Alexandria tavern to hear the reading of a petition to the British throne, including an address to the people of Great Britain, and the Resolves of the Continental Congress. He felt they were “full of duplicity and false representation.”<sup>41</sup>

Drinking was a primary activity at ordinaries. Nicholas Cresswell often lamented the next day that he was “very sick with my last night’s debauch.”<sup>42</sup> By 1788, when J.P. Brissot de Warville was traveling in the United States, General Washington informed him that drinking and parties at taverns were no longer as frequent, and that the inhabitants were “less given to intoxication, that it is no longer fashionable for a man to force his guests to drink, and to make it an honor to send them home drunk...”<sup>43</sup> John Davis observed in his travel journal that Americans preserve health by adopting the “Brunonian system of keeping up the excitement.”<sup>44</sup> [Theory that health is improved with excitement.]

A house of ill repute existed near Alexandria on the waterfront. References to this type of house are rare as their custom was not advertised in the local papers. John Davis waxed poetic in his travel journal about the allurements on display:

In approaching Alexandria, we passed an house on our right, in which the Paphian goddess [Aphrodite] had erected an altar. Some damsels were bathing before the door, who practiced every allurement to make us land; but we treated their invitations with the insolence of contempt. Oh! Modesty! Supreme voluptuousness of love! What charms does a woman lose when she renounces thee! What care, if she knew thy empire over the breast of man, would she take to preserve thee, if not from virtue, at least from coquetry.<sup>45</sup>

Assemblies and balls, where people gathered for dancing, were held at some taverns. George Washington’s birth-night ball was held at Wise’s tavern in Alexandria and, on an occasion when Washington was not present:

... at an interesting moment, A Portrait of the PRESIDENT, a striking likeness, was suddenly exhibited ... the song of "God bless GREAT WASHINGTON! long live GREAT WASHINGTON! Succeeded."<sup>46</sup>

Assemblies were organized by prearranged subscription. The Alexandria Assembly was held at Mrs. Lomax's in 1784. Gentlemen interested in becoming subscribers went to the printing office to obtain the regulations and subscription paper.<sup>47</sup> To prepare for the assemblies, ladies and gentlemen learned the latest dances. Francis Fabrit, a French dance master, opened a dancing school at Mr. Reeder's tavern to teach the latest English and French dances.<sup>48</sup>

Cards and gaming at taverns attracted patrons. An isolated ordinary was overwhelmed with guests due to a well-publicized cockfight. So overwhelmed was the ordinary that guests brought their own provisions.<sup>49</sup>

Business was often conducted at ordinaries by patrons both inside the tavern and outside. Captains of ships in port with merchandise to sell advertised that those who were interested in their merchandise should apply to them at the tavern.<sup>50</sup> In 1790, in front of Mrs. Hackley's tavern in Fredericksburg "ABOUT 40 likely Virginia born NEGROES, consisting of men, women, and children, the property of John Armistead" were to be sold at an estate auction.<sup>51</sup> Other auctions at taverns included the sale of an elegant chariot that was offered at a public sale in front of Mr. Benson's tavern in Fredericksburg.<sup>52</sup> W. Mounther and Co. advertised the sale of two single riding chaises and an elegant Sulky for sale that could be seen at Mr. Ward's tavern in Alexandria.<sup>53</sup> Land was also sold at taverns, such as Daniel Carroll Brent's sale of 4,000 acres at William McDaniel's tavern in the town of Dumfries.<sup>54</sup>

Men seeking employment have done so from a tavern, directing prospective employers to send notice to the tavern. A young man from Ireland advertised for a position as a bookkeeper for a merchant or as a private tutor noting that a line directed to the tavern would be attended to.<sup>55</sup>

Road commissioners met at Wise's tavern to adjust their accounts, select appropriate people to keep the toll gates, and review changes to the turnpike law.<sup>56</sup>

The Potomack Company that was in the process of building a canal met at Mr. Wise's tavern to present an Account of the Proceedings of the Presidents and Directors.<sup>57</sup> Merchants of Alexandria were called to Mr. Leigh's tavern in 1787 to consider a petition to open another tobacco inspection warehouse.<sup>58</sup>

When Fairfax County was forming a troop of horse in 1787, gentlemen wishing to become members were requested to meet at an Alexandria tavern.<sup>59</sup>

Crime occurred at taverns. An eight dollar reward was offered for the return of several items stolen from an Alexandria tavern. The items stolen were a pair of black leather saddlebags containing clothing and a two-foot rule, financial notes, copies of deeds, and military certificates.<sup>60</sup> Another tavern had a variety of plate stolen.<sup>61</sup> Violent crime occurred in Alexandria when two sailors called at a tipling house for grog and were turned away from the door. Someone in the house opened the door and shot one of them in the shoulder. The sailor soon after died and a jury of inquest was called and declared their verdict to be willful murder.<sup>62</sup>

### **Food and Beverage**

In the late 18th century, were served in some Virginia and Maryland taverns only at appointed times when all guests sat down for a meal at the same time. Breakfast, as plentiful as dinner and costing nearly the same rate, was described by a traveler as generally consisting of "tea, coffee, and different sorts of bread, cold salt meat, and very commonly besides, beef steaks, fried fish, &c. &c."<sup>63</sup> Isaac Weld found when traveling in Virginia that he could not even obtain bread any time of day since it was not kept ready-made, but baked about one-half hour before meal time and then served hot.<sup>64</sup> This limited schedule for dining was not always the case. George Leigh at The Bunch of Grapes in Alexandria advertised that suppers &c. were provided on the shortest notice.<sup>65</sup>

Spanish, Portuguese, and French wines; rum; brandy; English spirits; beer; cider; Virginia drams and perry were regulated beverages available at taverns.<sup>66</sup>

Evean M'Lean ran an establishment at the sign of the Orange Tree in Alexandria where he operated an oyster house during the season with the best liquors for gentlemen.<sup>67</sup> John Campbell also offered "to provide

By Frederick-County

Court, 17

Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ is hereby licensed to keep Ordinary agreeably to the directions of the act of Assembly, intituled "an Act for licensing and regulating of Ordinary-keepers" until August Court next.

signed by order of Court.

RATES and Prices of Liquors and other Accommodations to be vended by Ordinary-keepers.---As settled and Assessed by the Justices of Frederick-County Court, 17 \_\_\_\_\_ in Current money.

### Diet, &c.

A hot meal, with Cider or Beer,  
Ditto without ditto, -  
A cold meal, with Cider or Beer,  
Ditto without ditto -  
A hot meal for a Servant with Cider  
or Beer - -  
Ditto without ditto, -  
A cold meal for do. with Cider or beer,  
Ditto - without do.  
Lodging in a good clean bed, a night,

### Beer and Cider.

Good small Beer, per quart -  
Good Maryland strong Beer per quart  
Good London Porter, per Bottle  
Good Cider, per quart -

### Spirits.

Good Peach Brandy, per quart  
Good Apple Brandy, per quart  
Good Whiskey, per quart -  
Continental Rum, per quart -  
Good Gin, or Geneva per quart  
Good French Brandy, per quart  
Do. per qt. if made into good Toddy  
Do. per qt. if made into good Punch

### Spirits.

Good West-Indin Rum, per quart  
Do. per qt. if made into good Toddy  
Do. per qt. if made into good Punch  
Good Cane Spirits, per quart -  
Do. per qt. if made into good Toddy  
Do. per qt. if made into good Punch  
Good Arrack Spirits, per quart

### Wines.

Good Madeira Wine, per quart  
Good Claret per quart -  
Good Port Wine, per quart -  
Good Lisbon Wine, per quart  
Other European Wines, per quart

### Provender.

Oats per Bushel - -  
Indian Corn, per Bushel -  
Stabling a Horse on good and sufficient Hay or fodder for one night  
Do. for twenty-four hours -  
Pasturage of a Horse one night  
Do. for twenty-four hours -

\*\*\*\*\*  
*FREDERICK-TOWN, Printed by BARTGIS and HUDSON.*

oyster suppers during the season, for such gentlemen as chose to honor him with their company." He also boasted that he had the best liquors and would take in a few boarders on reasonable terms.<sup>68</sup> The popularity of oyster suppers is further supported by the opening of Abel Willis's Public and Oyster House near Captain Harper's wharf in Alexandria. His oyster suppers could be had on the shortest notice.<sup>69</sup>

### **Tavern Architecture**

Generally in American taverns, guests entered into the common room of the tavern, "which is common to every person in the house," where meals are served. Strangers sat down together for meals, including the tavern-keeper's family, if not a tavern in a large town. Rarely, it was observed, could a traveler obtain a private parlor or a single bedroom, but endured being crammed in rooms where there were so many beds it was difficult to walk between them.<sup>70</sup>

In some instances, particularly in the country, the sleeping chamber consisted of one large room shared by all, with each individual being provided a blanket.<sup>71</sup>

Amenities associated with tavern included gardens, outbuildings, water wells, and stables.<sup>72</sup> Henry McCabe advertised the Red Lion tavern of Leesburg and described it as a two-story stone house with "a good cellar under the whole, with a good kitchen, smokehouse, warehouse, stable, an excellent draw well, and a large garden."<sup>73</sup> An ordinary owned by William Fitzhugh and operated for seven years by Mr. John Bland in Stafford County was described as

... thirty Feet long and twenty Feet wide, has three Rooms and a Passage below Stairs, and four Rooms above, all well finished. The Kitchen is large, and has two Brick Chimnies.<sup>74</sup>

A lot in Alexandria was described as being suitable for a wagon-tavern because it had a half acre lot of ground attached. The frame house had two stories with a large passage and two rooms with fire places in each story, a kitchen, and a cellar.<sup>75</sup>

Mr. Henry Lyle's tavern in Alexandria, to be leased after his demise, was described in detail:



*Fairfax Arms, Colchester, Virginia.*

Library of Congress, HABS

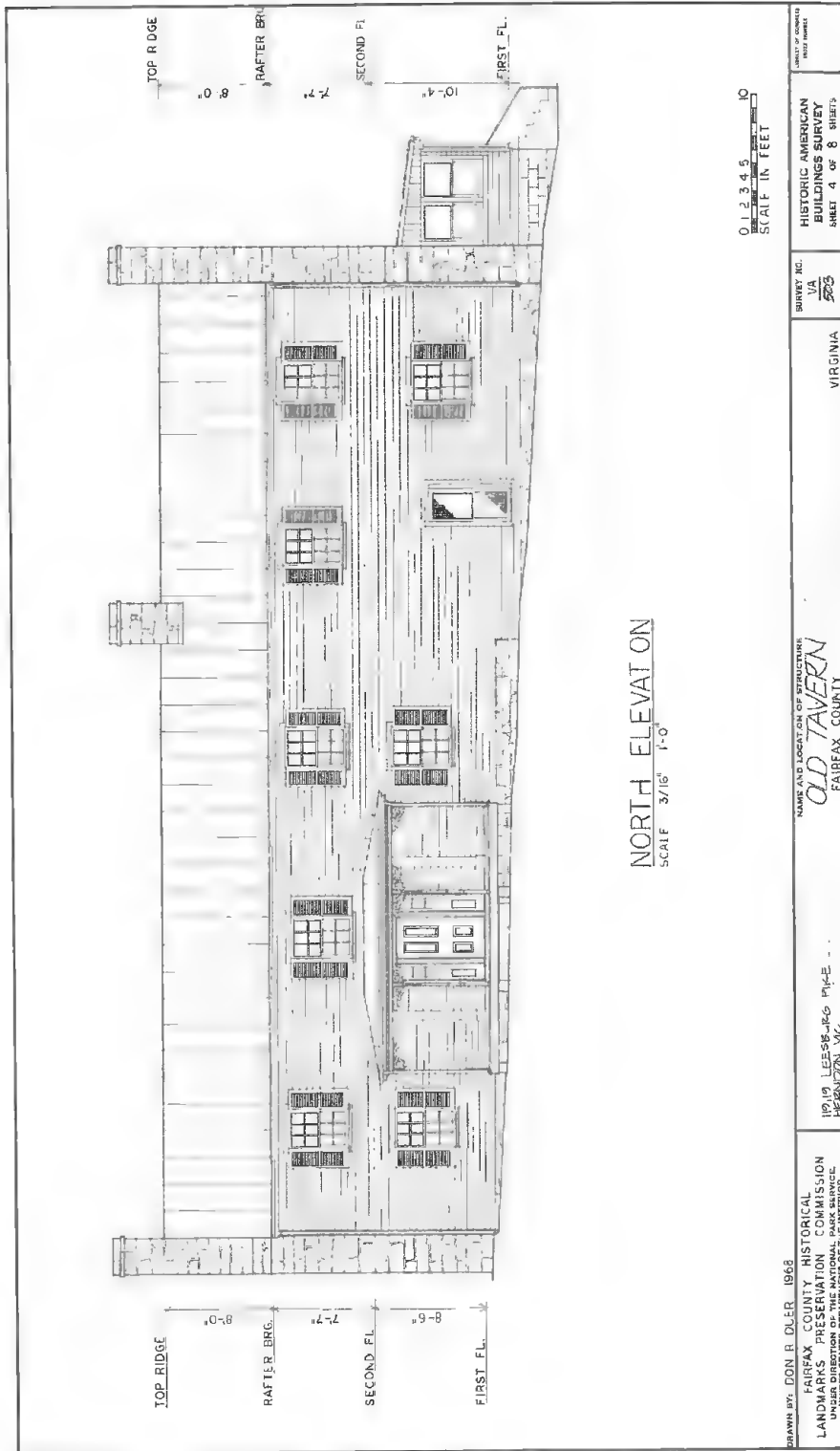


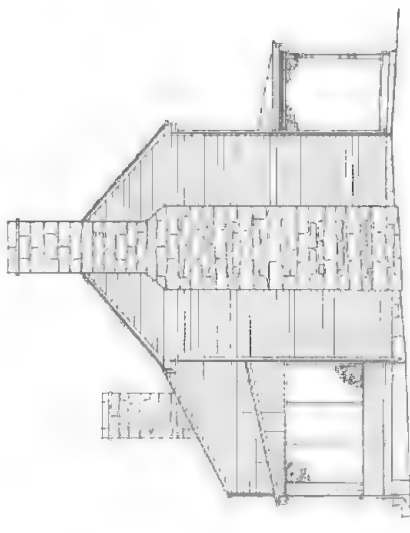
*Williams' Ordinary, Dumfries, Virginia.*

Library of Congress, HABS

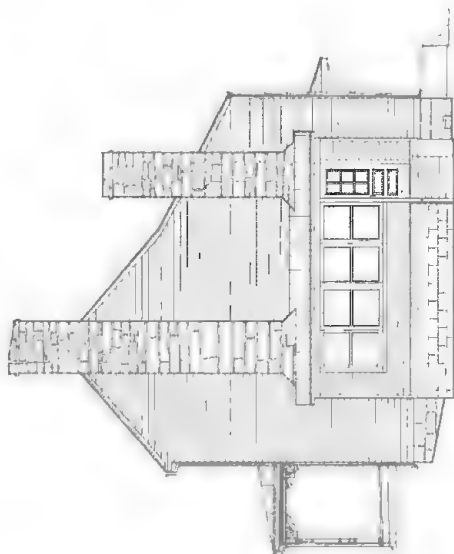


*Watts Ashby Tavern, Paris, Virginia.*  
Library of Congress, HABS





EAST ELEVATION  
SCALE 3/16" = 1'-0"

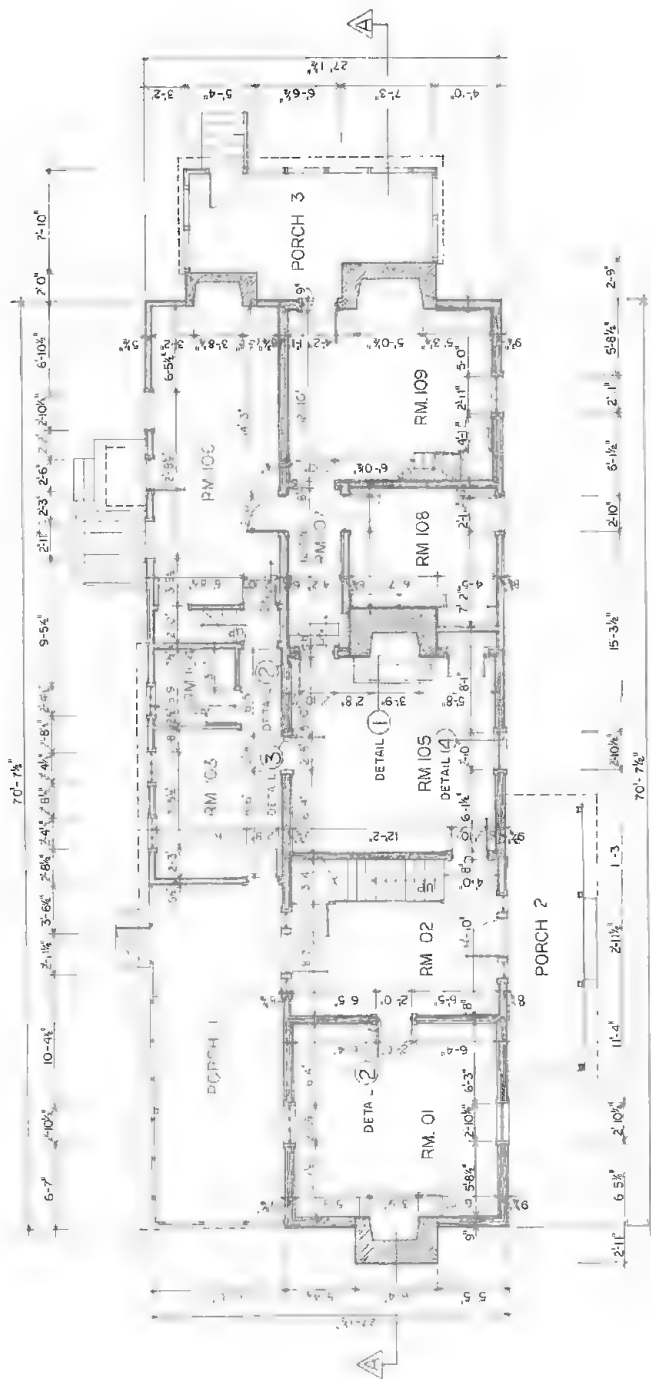


WEST ELEVATION  
SCALE 3/16" = 1'-0"

0 1 2 3 4 5  
INCHES  
SCALE IN FEET  
10

DRAWN BY: DON R. DUER 1968 FAIRFAX COUNTY HISTORICAL LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION <small>UNDER DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE          UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR</small>	NAME AND LOCATION OF STRUCTURE <b>OLD TAVERN</b> FAIRFAX COUNTY	SURVEY NO. VA 538	HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY SHEET 6 OF 8 SHEETS <small>UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN          LIBRARY</small>
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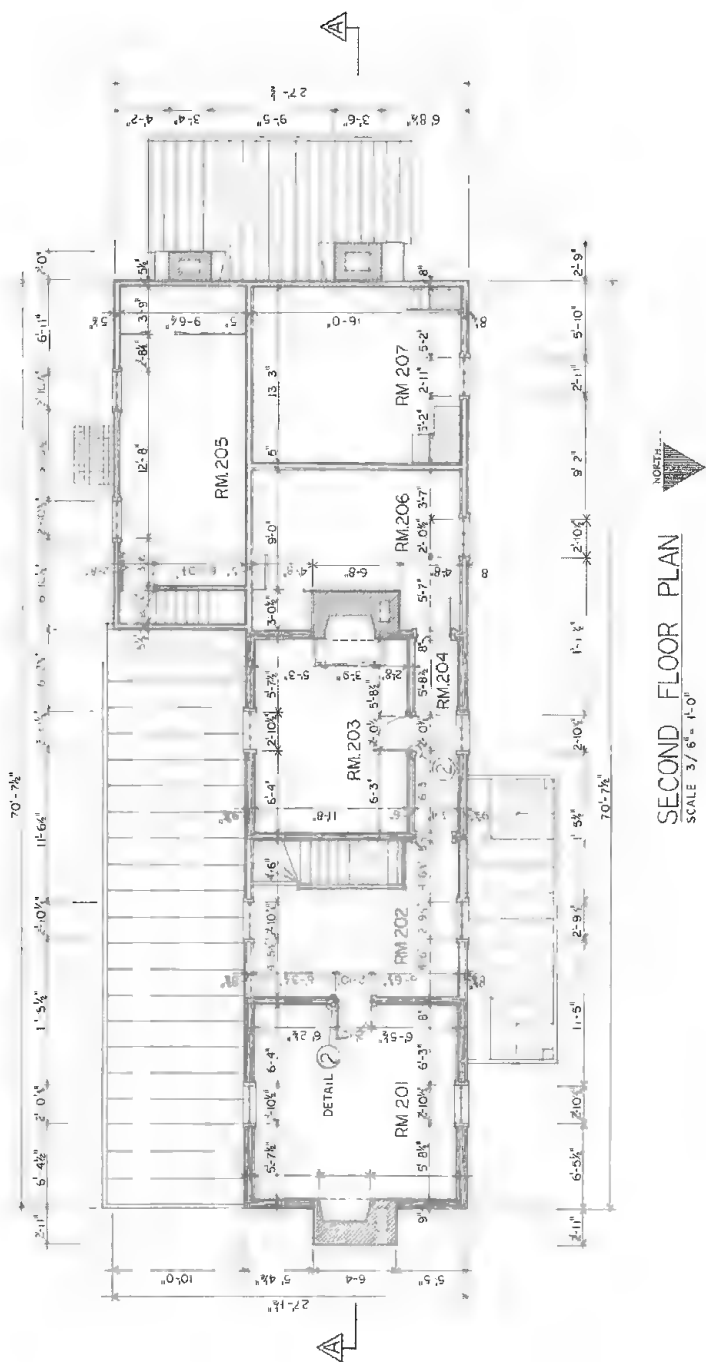
*Dranesville Tavern, Route 7, Herndon vicinity, Fairfax County, Virginia.*  
 Library of Congress, HABS



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SCALE 3/16" = 1'-0"

*Dranesville Tavern, Route 7, Herndon vicinity, Fairfax County, Virginia.*  
Library of Congress, HABS



*Dranesville Tavern, Route 7, Herndon vicinity, Fairfax County, Virginia.*  
Library of Congress, HABS

That large and commodious TAVERN in this town in which Mr. HENRY LYLES, deceased, lately lived, known by the name of the ALEXANDRIA INN and COFFEE HOUSE. This building is three stories high, and being a corner house is shaped like an L, having two fronts, one of 58 the other of 42 feet on Fairfax and Cameron Streets. It has on the first floor 5 rooms, one 26 by 24 feet, the others 16 by 12. That same number of rooms and of the like dimensions, are on the second floor with fire-places, and closets in the whole. On the third floor are six rooms and one or two more may be conveniently made. The garret be divided as the renter may choose. Under the whole houses a complete cellar, in which is a walled and covered well. The houses adjoining it are as follow: A new two story kitchen 18 by 21 feet; the chimney of which is so contrived as to admit of a fire-place 8 feet wide with an oven at one side, and a set of fixed boilers on the other; a fire-place is on the second floor; A stable 6 feet long by 26 feet wide, completely finished with 28 stalls and two more may be made, with a large shed on one side under which carriages may be kept. This stable is built with an attic story which makes the loft thereof to contain at onetime, by good stowage, from 25 to 30 tons of hay; also a corn house and necessary. The tenant may be accommodated with every species of house and kitchens furniture of the best kind.<sup>76</sup>

Roadside taverns in Maryland were described as all being similarly built of wood, with a porch extending across the entire length of the house. These taverns were distinguished by the number of handbills pasted up on the walls near the door rather than by a sign.<sup>77</sup> In Virginia, a country tavern was described to John Davis as being as elegant as Gadsby's, with a chimney at each end and weather boarded.<sup>78</sup>

William McDaniel had the misfortune of having his tavern burn down, so he fitted another place for the same purpose where gentlemen traveling through town could find accommodation.<sup>79</sup> A newspaper account of the fire described the harrowing event:

About 4 o'clock last Tuesday Morning, Mr. Mac Daniel's Tavern in Dumfries was destroyed by Fire, supposed to be occasioned by a Candle being left in the Bar. A Number of Gentlemen were asleep in the House, and narrowly escaped

by jumping out of the Chamber Windows, some of whom were much hurt. The Fire had got to so great a Height before discovered, that many of the Gentlemen had not Time even to take their wearing Apparel with them.<sup>80</sup>

Concern about fires resulted in John Davis frequently changing his lodgings. Davis, a tutor traveling in search of a position, never slept well at night and preferred to study by candle; however, the women of the house were usually too worried that the curtains would catch fire so Davis would move. He was not impressed with the houses and retorted in his journal that “had it been burnt to the ground, a few boards and a proportionate number of shingles would soon have constructed another.”<sup>81</sup>

The stables at Mr. Gadsby’s Alexandria tavern had floors constructed of wood boards since, as in many parts of America, there was insufficient straw produced to provide litter for the horses.<sup>82</sup> Gadsby was an Englishman from London who was a builder by profession, but switched to being a landlord when the building trade was unsuccessful.<sup>83</sup>

## **Furniture**

When the house and kitchen furniture of Henry Lyles was offered for sale, an advertisement described some items that may have been from his tavern:

Mahogany, walnut and Windsor chairs, mahogany and walnut tables, looking glasses, double and single feather beds, bedsteads, bed covering of most kinds, china, glass and queen’s ware, pots, pans, a roasting jack, iron and copper boilers, pewter, & c. and in short almost every kind of useful furniture for house or kitchen . . .<sup>84</sup>

The sale of the house and kitchen furniture of the Fredericksburg, Virginia, stage office, which operated as a tavern, was also advertised for sale. Up for auction to the highest bidders were “twenty-seven beds, with furniture complete, mahogany tables, black walnut ditto [tables], mahogany and Windsor chairs, a neat case of drawers, and a great variety of other valuable articles.”<sup>85</sup>

## Tavern Quality

Virginia was known for its hospitality. Travelers in need of a night's accommodation could apply at a gentleman's house for a room. Isaac Weld, Jr., upon crossing the Potomac into Virginia, searched for a tavern but learned there weren't any and was directed to the house of a gentleman who could be prevailed upon to offer hospitality, a common occurrence in Virginia. The gentleman assured Weld that there was a good tavern two miles away; however, in actuality the "wretched hovel" was six miles away.<sup>86</sup> Weld later met with some difficulty at another tavern when he arrived about midnight and the people at the tavern were unwilling to open their doors until he related the trials he had suffered to get there. He was further challenged with obtaining corn for his horse at that late hour. Weld was not impressed with the tavern as his description reveals:

I was shewn into a room about ten feet square, in which were two filthy beds swarming with bugs; the ceiling had mouldered away, and the walls admitted light in various places; it was a happy circumstance; however, that these apertures were in the wall, for the window of the apartment was insufficient in itself to admit either light or fresh air.<sup>87</sup>

In Leesburg, Nicholas Cresswell complained that "my landlady has got nothing to burn or anything to eat that is fit for a Christian. To pay 12 shillings a week is very hard, without I get the real necessities of life."<sup>88</sup> At the tavern of Mrs. Teaze, the place was so badly furnished that one tin vessel was the only bowl for family and lodgers to share, and the Marquis de Chastellux, a guest, was glad to have brought his own sheets.<sup>89</sup>

These impressions of the quality of Virginian taverns were markedly different from those of John Davis, who found them to be equal to the taverns in the market towns of England. To exemplify this point, he described a tavern located at the confluence of the Potomac and Occoquan rivers:

And on the side of this bridge stands a tavern, where every luxury that money can purchase is to be obtained at a first summons; where the richest viands cover the table, and

where ice cools the Madeira that has been thrice across the ocean.

The English bewail the want of convenient taverns in the United States; but the complaint is I think groundless; for I have found taverns in the woods of America, not inferior to those of the common market towns in England. My description of the tavern at the mouth of the Occoquan partakes of no hyperbolical amplification; the apartments are numerous and at the same time spacious; carpets of delicate texture cover the floors; and glasses [mirrors] are suspended from the walls in which a Goliath might survey himself.

No man can be more complaisant than the landlord. Enter but his house with money in your pocket, and his features will soften into the blandishments of delight; call and your mandate is obeyed; extend your leg and the boot-jack is brought to you.<sup>90</sup>

## Laws Governing Taverns

### Licenses

In colonial Virginia, ordinaries were licensed by the commissioners in the counties where they were situated in an effort to prevent the many disorders and riots that took place. An act in 1660 required ordinary keepers to obtain a license, provide security to ensure compliance with laws, sell at set rates, and to pay a license fee annually for the use of the governor.<sup>91</sup> Following the Declaration of Independence, the fee required to pay the governor for ordinary licenses was abolished.<sup>92</sup> Four years later, taxes to defray the cost of the new Commonwealth of Virginia government included a tax of 40 pounds for each ordinary license.<sup>93</sup> The tax was increased to 200 pounds in 1780.<sup>94</sup> Yet the tax was only five pounds in 1781 with an additional tax of 50 pounds for each billiard table.<sup>95</sup>

Ensuring the collection the ordinary license fees was not always accomplished. In 1766, the colonial government was attempting to collect fees in arrears as far back as 1755.<sup>96</sup>

Enterprising people exploited a loophole in the law by selling strong drink at outdoor booths set up:

Know all men by these presents,

THAT We *Robertson Gray James Dawson and Vezie Hairlip*

are held and firmly bound unto his Excellency *James P. Pierces, Esq.*  
Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia in the full and just sum of one hundred and fifty dollars, to  
which payment well and truly to be made to the said Governor or his successors, we bind our-  
selves and each of us, our and each of our heirs, executors and administrators jointly and severally by  
these presents. Witness our hands and seals this *10<sup>th</sup>* day of *May 1817*  
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The condition of the above obligation is such

that whereas the above bound *Robertson Gray*  
hath obtained a license to keep an ordinary at his house in the county of Fairfax If therefore the said  
*Robertson Gray* doth constantly find and  
provide in his ordinary, good, wholesome and cleanly lodging and diet for travellers, and stableage fodder  
and provender, or pasturage and provender, as the season may require, for their horses—for and during  
the term of one year, from the day of the date of these presents and from thence till the next court,  
held for the said county of Fairfax, and shall not suffer or permit any unlawful gaming in  
house, nor on the sabbath day suffer any person to tipple or drink more than is necessary. Then this  
obligation to be void, otherwise to remain in full force.

Signed and Acknowledged  
in Presence of

} *Robertson Gray* (Seal.)  
} *James Dawson* (Seal.)

*The Bond*

*(Seal)*

*10<sup>th</sup> paid: Vezie Hairlip*

Ordinary Bond Book, 1816-1842, Fairfax County Circuit Court Archives, Fairfax, Virginia

... at courthouses, race-fields, general-musters, and other public places, where, not only the looser sort of people resort, get drunk, and commit many irregularities, but servants and negroes are entertained, and encouraged to purloin their master's goods . . .

Thus, legislation was expanded to require licenses from anyone wishing to make retail sales of wine, beer, cider, brandy, rum, or spirits—whether indoors in their houses or out-of-doors, merchants excepted.<sup>97</sup> In 1779, brewers and distillers were also exempt, provided the liquor was not drunk at the house or plantation where it was sold.<sup>98</sup> The obligation to obtain a license was reaffirmed in 1705 and the language of the bond was codified as follows:

KNOW all men by these presents, that we A.B. and C.D. are held and firmly bound unto our sovereign lady Anne, by the grace of God, of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, &c. in the sum of ten thousand pounds tobacco convenient in the said county of E. To which paiment well and truly to be made to our said sovereign lady the queen, her heirs and successors, we bind ourselves, and every of us, our and every of our heirs, executors, and administrators, jointly and severally, firmly by these presents. In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and seals, the      day of

THE condition of this obligation is such, That whereas the above bound A.B. hath obtained a license to keep an ordinary at      if therefore the said A.B. doth constantly find and provide in his said ordinary, good, wholesome, and cleanly lodging and diet for travelers, and stableage, fodder and provender, or pasturage and provender, as the season shall require, for their horses, for that during the term of one year, from the      day of      and shall not suffer or permit any unlawful gaming in his house; nor on the Sabbath day suffer any person to tipple and drink more than is necessary; then this obligation to be null, void, and of none effect; otherwise to be and remain in full force, power, and virtue.<sup>99</sup>

Failure to obtain a license resulted in a fine. In 1668, county commissioners were required to license ordinary keepers who had to pledge security to ensure they comply with the law.

Anyone keeping a tipling house without a license would be fined 2,000 pounds tobacco for each offense. Half of the tobacco went to the county and half went to the informer.<sup>100</sup> Some men, such as William Payne Baylis and Bennett Hill, made a practice of informing against tipling houses. On November 22, 1770, they informed against five establishments that were retailing spirituous liquor without a license.<sup>101</sup>

By a 1748 act, if a person found guilty did not have the means to pay the fine, he received “on his or her bare back, twenty-one lashes, well laid on, at the public whipping post.”<sup>102</sup> Tipling houses became such a public nuisance that in 1779 the penalties of keeping an ordinary or tipling house contrary to law were increased to 50 pounds for each offence. Repeat offenders were committed to prison for a term of six months.<sup>103</sup>

### Standard Measures

Continual complaints were made against ordinary keepers due to the rates and measures used when retailing strong drink. An act in 1661 standardized the measures requiring that only English sealed measures of pints, quarts, pottles [half-gallons], or gallons be used. The penalty for noncompliance was a revoked ordinary license and a fine of five thousand pounds of tobacco.<sup>104</sup> In 1705, an act reaffirmed the liquid measures that liquor was permitted to be sold, adding the half-pint size.

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### Tavern Rates

Lawmakers were concerned about people not being able to pay high charges at ordinaries that resulted in debts. Rates charged by ordinary keepers were deemed excessive, thus in 1666 the House of Burgesses set maximum rates to be charged for wines, liquors, and cider. In compromise, ordinary keepers were now authorized to take their debtors to court provided the debtors had known the price they would have to pay, they were alive, and they were taken to court within a year.<sup>106</sup> In 1734, the amount of credit ordinary keepers could extend was limited to 20 shillings per year per patron. Debts for retailed liquor were not recoverable in court.<sup>107</sup> This provision was deemed injurious to ordinary keepers who were unable to collect debts from travelers and other transient people. Thus ordinary keepers were allowed to sell liquor on

credit to anyone not a sailor or resident of the county or town.<sup>108</sup>

The act was expanded the following year to limit the charge for food and lodging. The rates that ordinary keepers charged made it difficult for people who had business with general and county courts to afford to travel to the court and stay in a tavern. They had to either drop the case or ruin themselves by contracting a debt. The act was signed by Governor Sir William Berkeley.<sup>109</sup> The maximum rates for liquor were further reduced in 1671.<sup>110</sup>

Ordinary keepers and masters of tipling houses were prohibited in 1691 from extending credit to seamen and newly freed servants because these patrons were allegedly spending all their ready money, wages, and other goods that should have gone to the support of their families. To differentiate between the haves and have-nots, the law allowed the sale of drinks to any master of two servants or persons visibly worth at least 50 pounds sterling.<sup>111</sup>

In 1705, the responsibility for setting tavern rates was shifted to the individual county courts.<sup>112</sup> In 1748, the justices of each county were required at their March court to set rates and prices for the ensuing year for "liquors, diet, lodging, provender, stableage, and fodder, and pasturage . . ." Within one month of setting new rates, ordinary keepers were required to obtain a "fair table" of the rates and post them in the public entertaining room.<sup>113</sup> Some ordinary keepers must have attempted to mitigate this requirement by posting the rates where they were not easily read, thus a requirement was added that the rates must be posted "not more than six feet above the floor."<sup>114</sup> The law was revised in 1779 to permit the counties to set the rates as often as they deemed necessary, provided it was at least twice a year.<sup>115</sup>

The setting of the rates of liquors and lodging by county courts was comparable for each county in that each county priced similar liquors, hot and cold diets, lodging with clean sheets, etc. In 1756, Loudoun County required a one-fifth discount to all soldiers and expresses on his Majesty's service.<sup>116</sup>

While traveling in Virginia in 1788, J.P. Brissot de Warville found that he paid a dollar for supper in Virginia what would have cost him two shillings in Pennsylvania and one shilling in Connecticut. He attributed the higher cost to the scarcity of copper coin; that the expenses are

doubled for a family due to the impossibility of finding small change.<sup>117</sup>

The rates at Alexandria taverns varied, though the maximum allowable charges were regulated by the county courts. John Davis found that Gadsby kept the best house of entertainment in the United States and that the accommodations there were elegant. However, he wrote that “the splendour of Gadesby’s hotel not suiting my finances, I removed to a public-house kept by a Dutchman . . .”<sup>118</sup>

In the late 1700s, some Englishmen were tipping the servants, much to the dismay of less generous travelers, one of whom viewed it as “a growing evil, and of disagreeable consequences to travellers.”<sup>119</sup>

### Limiting the Number and Location of Ordinaries

Drunkenness and idleness were two scourges in colonial Virginia that had the unhappy effect of lightening the pockets of influential men. Idle drunks, for lack of industry and occupation, were a charge on the charity of the parish. They contracted debts beyond their abilities to repay and left the country to the detriment of their creditors. The excessive number of ordinaries and tipling houses was deemed the cause of the degradation since they were:

... found to be full of mischeife and inconvenience by cherishing idleness and debaucheryes, in a sort of loose and carelesse persons who neglecting their callings misspend their time in drunkennesse . . .<sup>120</sup>

So influential men enacted legislation in 1668 to limit the number of ordinaries and tipling houses in each county to one or two, with those to be situated near courthouses. Additional ordinaries could be authorized by each county as required for the accommodation of travelers at ports, ferries, and on major roads.<sup>121</sup>

In 1676, Governor William Berkeley called for new elections to the House of Burgesses in an effort to strengthen his political standing and control in the midst of Nathaniel Bacon’s rebellion. Several reforms were passed, including an act prohibiting ordinaries, except for those in James City and at the two ferries on each side of the York River. The justification given for the suppression of ordinaries was that the “many ordinaries in severall parts of the country are very prejudiciall . . .”<sup>122</sup>

During the fourth quarter of the 17th century, the number of

permitted ordinaries was further restricted to two ordinaries per county except where the general court was held.<sup>123</sup> The law limiting the number of ordinaries was repealed in 1704.<sup>124</sup>

Religious-minded people in the mid-18th century attempted to limit the number of ordinaries. Anonymous clergyman "A.B." wrote a letter in 1751 that was published in the *Virginia Gazette* condemning ordinaries, not for the use of the weary traveler, but because they have:

... become the common Receptacle, and Rendeavour of the very Dreggs of the People; even of the most lazy and dissolute that are to be found in their respective Neighbourhoods, where not only Time and Money are, vainly and unprofitably, squandered away, but (what is worse) where prohibited and unlawful Games, Sports, and Pastimes are used, followed, and practiced, almost without any Intermission, namely Cards, Dice, Horse-racing, and Cock-fighting, together with Vices and Enormities of every other Kind, and where their inseparable Companions of Concomitants, Drunkenness, Swearing, Cursing, Perjury, Blasphemy, Cheating, Lying, and Fighting, are not only tolerated (or conniv'd at) but permitted with impunity, nay, abound to the greatest excess . . .<sup>125</sup> Similar movements to limit the number of places of public diversions, and by these Means the spreading of Vice amongst the low People, were occurring in England.<sup>126</sup>

### Unlawful Gaming

The laws pertaining to ordinaries were revised and expanded in new comprehensive legislation enacted in 1705. For the first time, unlawful gaming and tipling, or drinking more than necessary, on the Sabbath was prohibited.<sup>127</sup> In 1750, John Anderson was charged with keeping a tipling house at Goose Creek and for breaking the Sabbath.<sup>128</sup>

By 1740, the youth of the colony were ruining themselves by wagering with professional gamesters at ordinaries, thus playing card games and dice (except for backgammon) were prohibited in ordinaries.<sup>129</sup> Eight years later, the law was revised to allow billiards, bowls, chess, and draughts, in addition to backgammon, to be played in ordinaries.<sup>130</sup> In a reversal, the government of the Commonwealth of Virginia prohibited cards, dice, billiards, or any gaming in a tavern or

accessory structure to a tavern in 1779.<sup>131</sup>

James Ingoe Dozier's ordinary license was suspended in 1756 after the Fairfax County Court found that he allowed unlawful gaming.<sup>132</sup> In 1786, Joel Beach advertised that:

... he is obliged to prohibit all gaming whatsoever in his house for the future, his design being to keep a still orderly house, for the use of travelers . . .<sup>133</sup>

With all of the gaming, drinking, general merriment, and strife, it is no wonder that early taverns remain a fascinating aspect of the American past.

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# **Boiled, Rubbed, Rinsed in a Tub: Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth-Century Laundry Practices**

By Jeanne Niccolls

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In 1783, Thomas Jefferson counseled his daughter, eleven-year-old Patsy:

Above all things and at all times let your clothes be neat, whole and properly put on. Do not fancy you must wear them till the dirt is visible to the eye. You will be the last one who is sensible of this . . . be you from the moment you rise till you go to bed, as cleanly and properly dressed as at the hours for dinner or tea.<sup>1</sup>

Standards of personal cleanliness began to rise in the eighteenth century, and, by the latter half, clean clothing and household linen had become a mark of gentility and refinement in "polite" society. Yet garments and linens certainly were not washed each time they were worn. Depending on one's social status or custom, many things were probably not cleaned until they were visibly dirty. Coats, vests, and gowns might be worn for weeks or months without any kind of cleaning.

Wealthy individuals could afford multiple changes of fashionable clothing. Yet additional factors were involved if Jefferson's instructions were to be followed: knowledge of laundry methods and some skill at implementing them, an available water supply, some specialized equipment, and, above all, either the means to purchase slaves or hire servants to wash and iron, or else the time and stamina to do it oneself.

## Resources

Washing, ironing, and mending were such a part of daily life that even women who kept diaries rarely mentioned these activities, much less described them in detail. Images of American women doing laundry before the middle of the nineteenth century are rarer still. To understand early American laundry methods, bits and pieces of information must be pieced together from a range of period sources—diaries and letters, estate inventories, drawings and paintings, newspaper advertisements, receipt books, housekeeping manuals, objects, architecture, etc.—at the same time keeping in mind that the methods, frequency, and amount of cleaning, washing, and ironing done by individual women could vary greatly, as could the quality of the final result.

For example, travelers' accounts describing laundry processes indicate the tremendous range in frequency of washing and whiteness of the wash. Scotsman John Harrower wrote from Virginia in 1774:

They wash here the whitest that ever I seed . . . and I may put on clean linen every day if I please.<sup>2</sup>

William Wirt, visiting Norfolk in 1803, reported, "the toilet, the mattress, the musqueto curtains are all white as snow and Sweet as a rose."<sup>3</sup> Englishwoman Janet Schaw, on the other hand, remarked in 1776 that the women of Wilmington, North Carolina, were "the worst washers of linen I ever saw . . . and tho it be the country of indigo they never use blue, nor allow the sun to look at them."<sup>4</sup>

Two basic processes were involved in the cleaning of clothing and linens: spot cleaning (methods that did not require full immersion in water) and wet cleaning or washing (the method that did use water). Other attendant activities were soap-making, blueing, starching, ironing, and drying.

## What Was Cleaned

The care of textiles and clothing was a significant part of good housekeeping. Cloth was very expensive. A family's garments, bed and table coverings, and other textiles, whether ordered from abroad and made by a tailor, mantua maker, or seamstress—or spun, woven, and sewn at home—were an investment in time as well as money.

The most frequently washed items were men's shirts, women's shifts, neck handkerchiefs, caps, aprons, and infant diapers. These, along with bed and table linens, stockings, and children's clothing, formed the bulk of a washing. Men's shirts served as both under and outer wear. The shift was the basic undergarment worn by women of all classes. Made of washable fabrics, usually linen, these garments were hand sewn with careful, close stitches that could not come out under the stress of vigorous laundering. Furthermore, wearing these undergarments protected costly bedding and outer garments from body soil, prevented them from absorbing body odor, and saved wear and tear on silk and wool gowns and waistcoats that could only be brushed and spot cleaned.

Working men and farmers frequently wore protective aprons and smocks over outer clothing. To protect outer garments from soiling, women regularly wore washable linen and cotton aprons for work and child care, pushing up their sleeves and tucking up their petticoats for washing and cleaning. Many women also changed their gowns in the afternoon, after the morning's work was done, to go visiting or receive callers. Elizabeth Porter Phelps of New England complained to her daughter, Betsy, in August of 1802 that she had cooked dinner for 10 men and made cheese, but "worse than that, I never took off my morning clothes till they were taken off to go to bed."<sup>5</sup>

Martha Ogle Forman, mistress of a Maryland plantation, remarked in September of 1818 that her wash consisted of "48 Napkins, and tablecloths without number."<sup>6</sup> The contents of a "great" or "large" wash probably included washable outer garments and large-sized linens such as sheets and tablecloths. Seasonal house cleaning or the aftermath of entertaining a number of house guests could also produce a quantity of bed and table linens.

Most women acquired a store of basic "receipts" for stain removal, washing methods, and starching, passed down orally from family

members and friends, just as most women learned the basic methods of clothing care as part of their education while growing up. Housekeeping manuals and receipt books, offering receipts for stain removal and washing instructions, were available from the mid-eighteenth century on, but only educated women able to read could take advantage of them or write down their own receipts.

Cornelia Lee wrote from Alexandria, Virginia, apologizing to Elizabeth Collins Lee at Sully:

. . . the lace, Sal [Cornelia's servant] thro mistake took to wash with my muslin. I am sorry for this as I know you to be so particular about it.<sup>7</sup>

Cleaning and ironing wool, linen or cotton required knowledge of a range of laundry methods. Fabrics were colored with vegetal dyes, and careless washing could result in shrunken and faded clothing, necessitating expensive replacements. The decorative laces and gauze, gold and silver trim, and ornamental buttons that embellished the fine clothing of the gentry, presented special cleaning and maintenance problems that required delicate handling and expertise.

### Spot Cleaning Processes and Substances

Fine garments made of silk and wool were not subjected to washing in water. To clean silks, Hannah Glasse, writer of *The Servants Directory*, recommended rubbing them with a peck of bran, first heated and dried by the fire. Bread crumbs mixed with powder blue also cleaned satins and damasks, flowered silks, and gold and silver stuffs. After rubbing the mix in with the hands, the reader was instructed to "shake the crumbs off well."<sup>8</sup>

In his *House Servants Directory*, Robert Roberts provided detailed instructions for cleaning the mud from a gentleman's coat. After drying by the fire or in the sun, the mud was rubbed off and the coat hung on a clothes horse and whipped with a rattan to release the dust. "But be careful . . . don't hit the buttons," he cautioned, "or you will be apt to break and scratch them." The coat was then brushed carefully "with the nap of the cloth" and folded. Thus, he assured, it would "keep smooth for any journey."<sup>9</sup> Both George Mason and George Washington of

Fairfax County owned “Cloaths Brushes,”<sup>10</sup> probably used for similar purposes.

“Always before you wash, you should look over your cloaths, and whatever spots there are, be sure to take out,”<sup>11</sup> advised Hannah Glasse. All manner of substances were suggested in the prescriptive literature for the removal of stains and spots, such as: Fuller’s earth (an absorbent clay), pearl ash (an alkaline), French chalk (a talc-like absorbent substance), ox gall (probably tannic acid, an astringent), and spirits of turpentine. A long list of cleaning ingredients could be found in the kitchen, storeroom, and cellar: salt, butter, lemons, bran, eggs, vinegar, bread, wine, and small beer.

To take spots out of silks, stuffs, or cloth, Fuller’s earth could be mixed with spirit of turpentine:

Make it into rolls and keep it for use; lay some on the silk, and rub the spot well with it till you think it is out . . . then take a hard brush and rub the spot well, and after that a clean cloth to rub out the Fullers earth.<sup>12</sup>

Anthony Heasel vowed that the most “effectual application” to take spots out of silk was spirits of turpentine, which “Be the spots ever so numerous, will infallibly take them out.” Just in case, he added “Maybe do twice.”<sup>13</sup>

To take all sorts of spots and stains out of linen, authors advised:

Hold the linen where the spot is round a silver or stone mug containing boiling water; cut a lemon in four, and rub the spot well with it; this will take it out entirely.<sup>14</sup>

Lacking lemons, one could try using soap, heated juice of the sorrel plant (which contains oxalic acid), salt, or vinegar.

Eliza Fowler Haywood, author of *A Present for a Servant-Maid*, presented *A quick Way to take Grease out of Woollen Cloth*:

Dab the spot with a piece of wet brown paper rolled up with a red hot coal in it. When one piece of paper and coal fails, let the stain be dabbed with another, till it disappears, and then brush . . .<sup>15</sup>

Wine was a common source of stains. To remove wine stains, Mrs. Haywood directed:

Rub all the stains very well with Butter, then put the linnen into scalding hot milk, let it lie and steep til cool, rub stained places in the milk til you see they are quite out.<sup>16</sup>

Other receipts called for strong lye and the sediment at the bottom of the wine bottle, or lemon juice followed by white soap and vinegar.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, people had only a vague understanding that the nature of the stain and the fiber it was on were significant factors in stain removal. For example, Hannah Glasse provided a receipt for *A Soap to take out all spots from cloth*. This she followed with two more receipts, both entitled *Another*, and then a third called *Another to take out grease and oily spots*, and finally the fourth, *Another for Spots*.<sup>17</sup> In other words, if one substance didn't work, try another . . . and another until the spot came out. The process of stain removal was largely one of trial and error.

### Who Cleaned and Washed

With few exceptions, from the seventeenth century well into the latter half of the twentieth, the care and cleaning of clothing and linens has been considered women's work. Few domestic activities in America have been so gender specific, though men typically helped chop the wood and sometimes hauled the water.

The most physically demanding of housekeeping tasks, washing was, not surprisingly, the first one delegated to someone else—a slave, hired servant, or washerwoman—the moment a housewife had the slightest means to do so. The wealthy gentry woman, plantation mistress, or wife of a well-to-do merchant often did not do these tasks. Martha Ballard of Maine reported in January 1793:

I have washt the first washing I have ever done without help this several years.<sup>18</sup>

Yet a housewife had to know how to clean and care for linens and clothing, so that she could properly instruct her servants. And even if

she could afford help, she might continue to care for her own and her husband's finery while someone else did the heavy work. Enumerating his wife's activities in 1778, Christopher Marshall observed that among them she saw "all our washing done, and her fine clothes and my shirts, which are all smoothed [ironed] by her."<sup>19</sup> Pupils attending boarding school might learn the finer points of the washing process.<sup>20</sup>

Taking in wash was one of a very few respectable avenues of economic survival for white women of reduced circumstances unable to find other forms of employment. It was also one of a very few occupational choices open to free black women. Some were hired by the day; others contracted for longer periods of time, sometimes in conjunction with other chores. Elizabeth Drinker of Philadelphia reported in 1803 "our black Judath was here yesterday and the day before doing 'days work,' as she calls it, her little [child] with her."<sup>21</sup>

Newspapers ran advertisements from women offering to do fine washing, clear-starching, "glazing" (polishing), ironing, and mending. For example, several women offered the following services in their local newspapers: Mary Hume of Annapolis advertised that she washed laces, blond, gauzes, and silk stockings "to look equal to new."<sup>22</sup> "M. Evans" mended and washed lace and silk stockings for the ladies of Williamsburg.<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Hall of Charles Town promised to clear-starch gauze or suits of lace in the "best manner."<sup>24</sup>

Enslaved women who could wash and iron were considered valuable assets. Their skills were identified and remarked on in probate inventories, plantation records, and advertisements for runaway slaves, by way of emphasizing their value. William Black, for instance, placed an advertisement in the *Williamsburg Gazette*, pledging a reward for the return of a "Negro woman named Sarah . . . She has been chiefly a House servant, is a fine seamstress, knitter, washer and ironer."<sup>25</sup>

A slave might be assigned to wash clothing for a hired servant or visitor to a plantation. In 1774, both Philip Vickers Fithian, at Robert Carter's Nomini Hall, and John Harrower, at Belvidere near Fredericksburg, had their washing done by enslaved washerwomen in partial exchange for their tutoring services.<sup>26</sup> George Washington provided overseers Burgess Mitchell and David Cowan "washing" along with lodging and "diet."<sup>27</sup> When Ann Collins visited her aunt and uncle

at Sully, a slave woman named Patty “washed” for her.<sup>28</sup>

### **Frequency of Cleaning and Washing**

William Hugh Grove wrote of Virginians in 1732:

They tell You they Wash their Bed Curtains once a fortnight,  
But the truth is they seldom use any in Summer...because of the  
Bugs which are plenty.<sup>29</sup>

Ascertaining how often wash was typically done is difficult. Diaries and other accounts suggest that at least by the last quarter of the eighteenth century some amount of washing was clearly being done on a more or less regular, if not weekly, basis in households having the necessary resources—although caring for infants and sickly family members or seasonal housekeeping tasks might cause a delay. In most households, a small wash (consisting of small clothes or undergarments) was probably undertaken more frequently than a great wash (usually large tablecloths and bedding). Wet weather and freezing temperatures may have made it hard to procure large quantities of water or to dry wet wash thoroughly, thereby limiting the scope of laundry activities to the most necessary items. Thomas Lee Shippen, visiting Sully in Fairfax County observed:

Now here is a glorious day after the storm. Madam Juba [the slave laundress] insists upon employing it at the wash-tub as she could not possibly work yesterday in the rain . . .<sup>30</sup>

In late eighteenth century Salem, North Carolina, most housewives did their wash on the same day. The town board minutes for September 11, 1787, state:

There is often complaint in town about lack of water, especially on the day when the hat-maker washes his hats and the families do their washing. The best help would be for the hat-maker to select a day when there is usually little washing done in the families.<sup>31</sup>

At her school for young ladies in Williamsburg in 1776, Mrs. Neill

furnished “board, lodging and washing”<sup>32</sup> along with instruction in reading and needlework. On the other hand, bedding in early American taverns was infrequently washed, and clean sheets the exception rather than the rule. They were often slept in by previous occupants, as English traveler Robert Hunter Jr. observed when he stayed at an inn in Wilmington, North Carolina, in the 1780s where, after a sweltering day, his party “retired to very disagreeable beds and dirty linen.”<sup>33</sup>

Another traveler, William Hugh Grove, reported in 1732:

The Negroes at the Better publick houses must not Wait on you  
unless in Clean shirts, and Drawers and feet Washed.<sup>34</sup>

It is impossible to know how often, if at all, slaves and those at the lower end of the social and economic scale cleaned their clothing and linens.<sup>35</sup>

## Soap Making

Until well into the nineteenth century, the washing process began with soap making, usually done at home once a year in cool weather, often in springtime, when the ashes from winter fires had accumulated and before the fats and grease from butchering and cooking turned rancid. John Jay Janney of Loudoun County, Virginia, recalled that ashes from fireplaces were saved through the winter and in the spring put into an “ash hopper and kept supplied with water” carefully poured over the ashes.<sup>36</sup> Lye, an alkaline liquid, dripped out of a hole at the bottom into a pail or bucket. Hannah Washington’s “soap trough” at her Fairfax County home in 1806 and the ash box, “Lie Drippers,” and “Stands” that Nathaniel Burwell paid to have constructed in 1798 and 1804 probably operated in the same way.<sup>37</sup>

When it was “strong enough to float an egg in the liquid,” the lye was poured off and strained, then mixed with an appropriate proportion of grease. This odiferous mixture was boiled slowly all day in a large iron cauldron out-of-doors over a hot fire until it was bright brown, clear, and thick as jelly. The quality of the final product could be unpredictable. James Parker of Shirley, Massachusetts, attributed the success of his wife’s soap-making venture in February of 1772 to “very good Luck.”<sup>38</sup>

Once cooled, the soap was cut into chunks and placed on boards in a

loft or garret to dry. John Jay Janney reported, "They would nearly every spring make a . . . quantity of hard soap,"<sup>39</sup> the kind favored for laundry. Lye was sometimes added directly to a tub of badly soiled clothes to boost the effectiveness of the soap. Both imported and American-made commercial soaps were sold in Virginia and the colonies at least from the 1760s. English traveler Janet Schaw was surprised in 1776 to find that women in North Carolina seldom bothered to make soap. Raw materials were available, but these rural consumers preferred to purchase Irish soap "at the store at a monstrous price."<sup>40</sup>

### **Where Washing Was Done**

In Virginia, Maryland, and elsewhere wherever there was the means to do so, the drudgery of washing was performed in an outbuilding or, weather permitting, outside in the yard, kneeling on the ground or bending over washtubs set up on wooden stools and benches. Some homes had a separate building called a wash house or laundry (both terms were used). Washing was also done in detached kitchens, combination kitchen-laundries, or inside the house. Stephen Collins, visiting his daughter at Sully in Fairfax County, boasted that her new home featured a "complete double Kitchen or Kitchen and Wash house . . . no finer one in 20 miles square" (although there were wash houses at Mount Vernon and several other Fairfax County estates).<sup>41</sup>

Elizabeth Drinker reported in June 1807: "A Hydrant was fixt up in our Wash-house [this] morning."<sup>42</sup> Few women had such modern conveniences. Those who did not have ready access to a well or pump, the equipment to haul and heat water, or someone to do it for them, probably could do their wash in a stream, though availability of water in urban areas may have been problematic for the poor. During the Revolutionary War, soldier Joseph Plumb Martin wrote home:

I had been in the afternoon, at a small brook in the rear of the camp, where the troops mostly got their water, to wash some clothes . . .<sup>43</sup>

Men serving in the military were notable exceptions to wash being solely women's work.<sup>44</sup>

## Washing Implements

Most often inventories did not identify the room where objects were located, but occasionally spaces were specifically identified as a wash house or laundry. Stephen West of Prince Georges County also had “an ironing room.” Some of these spaces held a range of laundry implements. Others had what could only be considered the most basic washing equipment (a pail for hauling water, a pot to heat it in, and a tub for washing), suggesting that these basic multi-functional implements may have been appropriated on wash day from other locations and tasks about the home.<sup>45</sup>

Some wash houses were particularly well equipped, others less so. For example, in 1776, Robert Eden of Annapolis had in his laundry:

4 sad[d] irons, 2 box irons and 2 stands, 1 large fixed copper [pot], 1 large fixed kettle, 7 washing tubs, 3 clothes horses, 1 large and 1 small pine table.

Eden also had stools and clothes baskets. Ralph Wormley of Middlesex County, Virginia, had only “4-1/2 pair sadd irons” and one small kettle in his laundry in 1791, yet one of his slaves was identified as “Laundry Mary.” Lawrence Washington’s Fairfax County wash house held:

2 copper basons, 4 cast irons, 1 box iron and heaters and two stands, and two tables.

In George Washington’s wash house at Mount Vernon there were “9 tubs, 4 pails, 2 piggins, 4 tables, and 2 boilers.”<sup>46</sup> Another Virginian, Nathaniel Burwell, paid for a bench, a cloathes horse, and putting a lock put on the wash house door in 1801. Three years later he bought “2 Large Cloathes Horses” and added “spouts on each side of the laundry,” perhaps to catch rainwater in barrels to use for washing.<sup>47</sup> Other equipment located in wash houses and laundries include: kettles and boilers of iron, brass or copper, washing buckets, pidgins, pails and rinsing tubs, and paraphernalia for drying and ironing.

As iron was known to rust and stain, copper or brass kettles were preferable for boiling linens. Still, according to John Jay Janney, every Loudoun County kitchen had “a large iron pot for boiling clothes on

wash days” —probably the same one used for a multitude of household chores.<sup>48</sup> Washing sticks, usually a stick or a tree branch, were used to stir clothes while they were boiling and to lift them from the hot water.

In 1800, Thomas Mason of Prince William County may have been one of the first of his Virginia contemporaries to own a washing machine.<sup>49</sup> Anne Bowen Mitchell wrote from Georgia in May of 1793, asking Lydia Bowen Clark how she liked her “washing jinny . . . if it succeeds well I will have one, for now it takes generally the whole time of one servant to wash.”<sup>50</sup> A variety of washing machines were available from the late eighteenth century on; the first American patent dating from 1805.

The *Rural Magazine* carried an advertisement in 1819 that complained:

The people have been so abominably cheated and gulled by the endless variety of these [washing] machines, it is difficult to attract their attention to any one, however exceptional. Almost every bungler who can make a lumber box or an ox sled has invented them and most of them require the power of an ox to use them at all.<sup>51</sup>

Though they held the equivalent of several shirts at a time, these early patent machines seem to have increased, rather than reduced, the burdens of washday. Early washers tore clothing, left rust spots from the bolts that fastened the parts together, and often leaked.

### **The Washing Process**

Pails of water were needed to do a good days washing. Soft water that would make the soap lather was collected in rain barrels or cisterns. Regular water could be softened by mixing in lye or pearl ash.

Linen was the predominant fabric in the wash, typically subjected to long soaking and boiling. Though there were variations and some improvements in equipment over time, the washing process for plain white clothing and household linens described in mid-eighteenth century housekeeping manuals changed little through the middle of the nineteenth century.

As a first step while the water is heating, Eliza Fowler Haywood

recommended:

Sort your cloathes, laying the small in one Heap, and the Great in another: the coarse must also be separated from those that are finer.<sup>52</sup>

The next step, “the very best way of preparing for the great wash,” Hannah Glasse claimed to have learned from “a lady in the country.” After wetting the linen with warm water and rubbing it with soap, “let them lie till next day in this manner with hot water; in the morning . . . [Begin] to wash as usual . . .”<sup>53</sup> By 1800, at least some women had adopted this habit. Frances Baylor Hill of King and Queen County, Virginia, wrote in her diary on April 21, 1797, “put my muslin in to soak.”<sup>54</sup> Finer pieces were put through the process first and then increasingly coarser ones.

Washing “as usual,” according to Eliza Haywood, meant soaping the articles, then rubbing each one piece by piece between the hands in a tub of water “of moderate heat.” Then the process was repeated with more hot water. “If not very dirty, 2 lathers will suffice, but if it has been worn long, you must give it 3.”<sup>55</sup>

Next, the items were boiled in soapy water mixed with “a good deal of the best Stone Blue”<sup>56</sup> and stirred while boiling. Then they were washed again, the soap rinsed out, and finally everything rinsed again in a tub of clean water “well-blued.” After wringing out each item one by one, they were put out to dry.

Just how closely the advice books were followed is not known. Individual methods of washing varied, often depending on the scrupulousness of the person doing the wash. Extra sudsing and rinsing may have been skipped when water supplies were short. John Harrower reported simply, “they first Boyle all the Cloaths with soap, and then wash them”<sup>57</sup> suggesting that things were rubbed after boiling and not before (a practice some writers thought set the dirt and made it harder to get out). In Wilmington, Janet Schaw was shocked to see:

All the cloaths—coarse and fine, bed and table linen, lawns, cambricks and muslins, chints, checks—all are promiscuously thrown into a copper with a quantity of water and a large piece

of soap. This is set a boiling, while a Negroe wench turns them over with a stick. This operation over, they are taken out, squeezed and thrown on the Pales to dry.<sup>58</sup>

People were aware that different fabrics required different wash water and ironing temperatures. “Silk handkerchiefs never should be washed in hot water, for it spoils them intirely,” cautioned Hannah Glasse, who suggested they be washed in cold and then lukewarm water, and “cotton and fine linen in warm suds.”<sup>59</sup> Lydia Maria Child, in *The American Frugal Housewife*, agreed, recommending that:

Silk, or anything that has silk in it, should be washed in water almost cold. Hot water turns it yellow. It may be washed in suds made of nice white soap; but no soap should be put upon it.<sup>60</sup>

Flannel undergarments, stockings, and other woollen clothing also were not boiled and had to be treated with care to avoid shrinkage and yellowing. After washing in suds, they were not rinsed, just wrung very dry.

Printed cottons presented special problems. Glasse cautioned:

Don’t soap them on any account for that will take all the colour out; nor wash them in too hot water . . . After . . . they have gone through three suds . . . rinse and blue them in pump water immediately, hanging them up directly.<sup>61</sup>

Child suggested, “An ox’s gall will set any color—silk, cotton, or woollen. I have seen the colors of calico, which faded on washing, fixed by it.”<sup>62</sup> At Woodlawn in Fairfax County, Nelly Custis Lewis took the trouble to write down her enslaved washerwoman’s receipt. “Old Doll’s Method of Washing Color’d Dresses”:

[Wash in] two lathers of milk warm water, rinse them in fair water milk warm . . . starching with salt prevents the colour from running.<sup>63</sup>

## Blueing

“Blue” was sewn inside a bag of white flannel to be submerged in the

rinse water and squeezed to give it a light blue color.<sup>64</sup> Glasse advised, “. . . mix your soap and blue together, and beat it up with a whisk, then pour it into the water to boil the cloaths; it keeps the blue from settling in the clothes . . .”<sup>65</sup>

Both blue and starch were available for purchase in Alexandria, Virginia, and elsewhere in early America from the mid-eighteenth century on. Starch could also be made at home. The most common blueing products were blue, stone blue (a precipitated form of indigo and starch formed into stone-shaped cakes), figg blue (a soluble blue), and powder blue (smalt, a blue-colored potassium glass, crushed into a fine powder). Surviving accounts show that George Mason of Fairfax County purchased two pounds of fig blue in August of 1766 and the same amount again in the summer of 1780.<sup>66</sup> Virginian Robert Beverley repeatedly bought both “4 lb fig blue and 1/2 lb powder blue” at the same time.<sup>67</sup> Further suggesting that different types of blue served different purposes in the cleaning process, Rosalie Calvert wrote to her sister from Riversdale in Maryland, explaining:

This is the first opportunity I have had to send you the washing blue that you asked me for. I hope you will find it suitable and the kind you wanted.<sup>68</sup>

## Starching

After the bluing rinse, the clothes were wrung very dry. Starch stiffened and improved the appearance of fabrics and helped them resist soiling. “Muslin, and very thin or old Cambrick and Lawn require starching or they will look like Rags, and not last clean a moment,”<sup>69</sup> cautioned Eliza Haywood. Here again Nelly Custis Lewis of Woodlawn Plantation in Fairfax County relied on the method used by her enslaved washerwoman:

For thin muslin use very thick starch, for thick muslin & camb[rick] very thin squeeze out the starch, wring them in old linen or diaper. Then dry them again . . .<sup>70</sup>

Printed cottons and chintzes, fine linens and lace, were also starched.

Starch could be made at home from various substances mixed with

water, such as potatoes and wheat flour. Nonetheless, those who could afford it may have found it much more convenient to purchase their starch. Lord Botetourt had 50 pounds on hand in the storeroom of the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg in 1770. John Mills had only "1 paper" of starch at his Fairfax County home in 1784.<sup>71</sup> Mary Collins purchased seven pounds of starch in Philadelphia in 1801 to ship to her daughter at Sully in western Fairfax County.<sup>72</sup>

Eighteenth-century authors of housekeeping manuals advocated mixing a small quantity of powder blue into the starch with the water. Glasse recommended boiling the starch well:

. . . for it can't be boiled too much, nor will your linen iron, or look well, unless the starch be well boiled . . . As to alum, gum arabic, and candle stirring into starch as it boils, it is all wrong, and better without, the boiling of it well does the whole . . . If any thing be put into starch, isinglas[s] (a clarifying agent made from fish bladders) is the best . . .<sup>73</sup>

Mrs. Child and other nineteenth-century authors disagreed, and recommended mixing in a little gum-arabic for a more glistening surface and stirring with a candle to prevent starched articles from sticking to the ironing cloth.<sup>74</sup>

Articles to be stiffened were dipped into the starch mixture after it had cooled to "just warm," then wrung and put out to dry or clapped (patted) between the hands until dry enough to iron. Care had to be taken to ensure even saturation of starch.

### **Drying and Bleaching**

Clean wash was hauled outside in baskets or tubs. Charles Carroll of Maryland purchased "6 wicker baskets with handles of different sizes in a nest for the use of a laundry."<sup>75</sup> George Washington bought "2 Cloths baskets" in 1775 and another two in 1787.<sup>76</sup>

The eighteenth-century practice of spreading wet white laundry in the sun on the grass or over a hedge, bushes, or a fence continued into the nineteenth. Each article had to be spread smoothly to reduce wrinkles and ensure even bleaching. In North Carolina, Janet Schaw remarked:

Mrs. Miller . . . showed them [how to wash linen] by bleaching those of Miss Rutherford, my brothers and mine. How different a little labour made them appear, and indeed the power of the sun was extremely apparent in the immediate recovery of some bed and table linen . . . so ruined by sea water, that I thought them irrevocably lost.<sup>77</sup>

John Jay Janney observed that housewives in Loudoun County, Virginia, spread their muslin “on the grass, usually in the meadow, and wet [it] with a ‘watering pot’ . . . while the sun was shining, at frequent intervals during the day. It was thus bleached quite white in a few days.”<sup>78</sup>

A protected area, like the fenced in drying yard behind the wash house at Mount Vernon, was necessary for drying. David Brown of Massachusetts reported in 1791:

Came from the Northeast a whirlwind and took up several articles that Mrs. Wheeler had washed and whirled them in the air . . . carried off two handkerchiefs and several other small articles.<sup>79</sup>

Dogs, chickens, and other animals running loose were also natural adversaries of this practice, causing housewives and servants to keep a close eye on drying clothing.

As soon as each piece was rinsed, Eliza Haywood advised her readers to “hang it directly on Lines.”<sup>80</sup> Living in the White House in 1800 while it was still under construction, Abigail Adams wrote to her daughter:

There is not a single apartment finished. . . . We have not the least fence, yard or other convenience without, and the great unfinished audience room I make a drying room of to hang up the clothes in.<sup>81</sup>

Joseph Galloway of Anne Arundel County, Maryland, owned a clothesline, and Robert Carter bought “80 Fathom of Hair line for Drying Cloths on” for his store in Westmoreland County, Virginia.<sup>82</sup> Clotheslines appear in New England inventories of the mid-eighteenth century; they were used in England and France. Made of twisted or

braided horsehair or hemp, they were strung between two posts or trees, propped up with a forked branch to prevent clothing from sagging in the dirt. In 1804 Nathaniel Burwell paid for “Hewing Posts for the Drying Yard.”<sup>83</sup>

“Had the Cloathes to dry by the Fire, which is very troublesome,” complained Sarah Logan Fisher of Philadelphia in January 1789.<sup>84</sup> In inclement weather a “clothes horse” (an indoor drying rack) was placed in front of the wash house or kitchen fire. Wooden clothes horses, also described as “cloth stands” and “linen horses,” were kept in wash houses and laundries as well as the pantry, chamber, kitchen, ironing room, and garret (where heat rising from the chimney would help dry the articles and where they would be away from the bustle of household activities).

### **Ironing**

August 24, 1818, found Martha Ogle Forman busy on her Maryland plantation with a “large ironing, twelve tablecloths, and everything else in proportion.”<sup>85</sup> Besides the wash house and laundry, irons were kept in nearly every room of the house: hall, nursery, bed chamber, store house, kitchen, loft and garret, dairy and milk house, closet, spinning house, cellar, quarter, lumber room, passage, pantry, and ironing room.

Lord Botetourt was one of the few people in colonial Virginia to own a mangle, which he kept with “four mangle cloths” in the laundry at the Governors Palace in 1770.<sup>86</sup> George Washington shipped the mangle he had used in Philadelphia to his home at Mount Vernon in 1797.<sup>87</sup> A mangle involved folding smaller items into large tablecloths and sheets, then wrapping them around thick wood rollers, placed across the bed of a mangle. Over them was a wood box weighted with stones; the box was cranked to and fro, its weight smoothing and polishing the linens. Though advertised for domestic sale, the fact that they were used for smoothing large quantities of linen may have made them impractical for most individual households.

Two basic types of irons were used to iron or “smooth” clothing. Box irons used a metal “heater” inside the body of the iron. The second type was the flat, also called the “sad” (from the word solid or heavy) or smoothing iron—all terms used in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Usually these were listed in pairs. George Mason of Gunston

Hall owned both types: in 1766 he purchased “1 pair Box Irons and Heaters”; in 1780 he paid for “2 pairs Sad Irons.”<sup>88</sup> After 1795, few box irons appear in estate inventories. They were being replaced by flat irons. These implements often weighed several pounds apiece and were heavy to handle. From the late nineteenth century, Anne Gertrude Sneller recalled:

The heavy flatirons were once called sadirons; I assumed that the name reflected the ironer’s state of mind.<sup>89</sup>

Heaters and flat irons came in pairs and multiples so that one or more could be heating on the hearth while the other was in use.<sup>90</sup> Each was only good for about five minutes before it needed replacing. Once heated, the base was wiped clean with an old cloth to make sure the iron would not scorch. Wrought iron stands, sometimes with decorative bases, were sometimes used to set down a hot iron for a moment while smoothing.

Dry linens and clothing were first dampened with water, then ironed on a kitchen or “ironing table,” covered by an old woolen blanket with a linen or cotton “ironing cloth” on top. An experienced ironer could gauge the heat of her iron by seeing if a few drops of water would bounce off the surface. Still, care was needed, especially when ironing starched items, to avoid scorching and to attain a perfectly dry garment with a smooth finish.

In Virginia, Frances Baylor Hill wrote in her diary that she had “clapt and ironed my muslin” the day after it was washed.<sup>91</sup> Even with two or more irons, the task was slow going. Elizabeth Porter Phelps of Hadley, Massachusetts, boasted to her daughter in March 1801:

I must tell you what I ironed in one hour or less: Four stocks, 1 muslin handkerchief, two caps, . . . [and] 1 cap crown and border for myself.<sup>92</sup>

## Conclusion

Depending on the size of the wash, the weather, and other intervening circumstances, the entire process could take from one or two days to a week to finish. Young Sally Cary Fairfax of “Toulston” in Fairfax

County, recorded in her diary:

On Thursday, the second of January 1772, Margery went to washing, and brought all the things in ready done on Thursday the 9th of the same month. I think she was a great while about them, a whole week!<sup>93</sup>

Other accounts suggest that this length of time was not at all unusual.

Sometimes wash served a secondary, social function. Thomas Lee Shippen, visiting Sully in Fairfax County, wrote his father:

... there is no describing or resisting the hospitable importunities of these ... Virginians. If you call at a house determined to stay but one day, you are very fortunate if you get off in three, and your servants are always leagued against you. Either your horse wants a shoe, or your carriage a pin ... or your cloaths which were washed yesterday are not quite dry ... and stay you must.<sup>94</sup>

All of these laundry activities took place against the backdrop of everyday family life: caring for youngsters and the elderly, nursing the sick, getting a meal on the table, supervising slaves and servants, endless needlework, entertaining guests, and on and on. In spite of so-called improvements like the washing machine, the actual washing process changed little from the mid-eighteenth through the mid-nineteenth century.

The next great technological advances—the scrubbing board and the clothes pin—were about to make their appearance and, along with a veritable explosion in laundry paraphernalia, would be common household items by 1850, by which time women were being measured by the cleanliness of their homes and family's clothing. As more and more nineteenth-century Americans could afford greater numbers of washable cotton clothing and household linens, more and more women would find themselves busy with the wash.

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*database of transcribed probate inventories—an invaluable resource for all historians of early American material culture and one from which material for this article is drawn. The author welcomes additional information about the care and cleaning of clothing and textiles as practiced in early America.*

## Endnotes

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# **Testimony from the Court House: The Civil War Letters of Z.T. Miller from Fairfax Court House, Virginia, 1862**

By Scott S. Taylor

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Z.T. Miller, a Union soldier in the 61st Ohio Volunteer Regiment during the Civil War, wrote a series of eleven letters from Fairfax Court House, Virginia, in 1862, providing fascinating documentary evidence about that location during the great sectional conflict. While Miller penned over 120 war-time letters, all of which are preserved in the Georgetown University Library Special Collections Research Center in Washington, DC, his reports from Fairfax Court House are the focal point of this article. Miller's letters add to the historical record the experiences of a Northern soldier stationed at that site.

The courthouse in Fairfax, Virginia, has a long and significant history. In 1742, the county of Fairfax County was established.<sup>1</sup> The original courthouse was erected on William Fairfax's land called "Spring Field," near modern-day Tysons Corner.<sup>2</sup> In 1752, court was moved to Alexandria. In 1798, James Wren designed a new courthouse to be built in what now is the City of Fairfax. In 1800, that new structure, the Fairfax Court House, was completed.<sup>3</sup> In 1802, the postal branch of the

courthouse was created, formalizing the name as Fairfax Court House.<sup>4</sup>

On the eve of the Civil War, Fairfax Court House had a population of about 300 people.<sup>5</sup> Fairfax voted for secession by a large majority.<sup>6</sup> During the war, Union and Confederate troops camped nearby and scouted the area of Fairfax Court House. Each side held the site during the course of the war. According to historian Nan Netherton, "Civil War life in the little town was spiced with raids, spies, kidnappings, and disputed and divided loyalties."<sup>7</sup> Close to some important Civil War battles in Virginia, Fairfax Court House was a strategic point during the war.

In the spring of 1861, Union troops occupied Alexandria, Virginia, and Confederates stationed there moved from there to Manassas, Virginia.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, the Union built forts outside the perimeter of Washington, DC to protect the U.S. capital city. In May 1861, the Confederates controlled Fairfax Court House.<sup>9</sup> Advanced scouts and pickets engaged in small skirmishes. Fairfax Court House, wrote Netherton, became a "no-man's-land."<sup>10</sup> Following the Union defeat at the First Battle of Bull Run (Manassas), the Confederates encamped in Centreville, Virginia, not far from Fairfax and occupied Fairfax Court House for about six months.

During the winter of 1861 to 1862, minor skirmishes occurred near Fairfax Court House. In early 1862, the North regained Fairfax Court House and held it until the end of the war.<sup>11</sup> In fact, in March of 1862, Northern parties in Fairfax Court House met at the old courthouse to hold local elections, and by May 1862 the postal function of the courthouse had opened again.<sup>12</sup>

Fairfax Court House became a Union camp. Some runaway slaves traveled through the area.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, in August 1862, many Northern troops passed through the site on their way to the Second Battle of Bull Run. The Battle of Chantilly (Ox Hill), the largest battle in Fairfax County during the war, occurred nearby on September 1.

It was in late 1862, from September to November, that Union soldier Z.T. Miller and his fellow 61st Ohio boys encamped at Fairfax Court House. Corresponding with his family at home in Ohio, Miller described in vivid detail his experiences. The Union troops at that time were subject to raids by the enemy, illness in camp, and the climate of Virginia at that time of year. Z.T. Miller's name appears as Taylor Miller

in the *Official Roster of the Soldiers of the State of Ohio in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1866*.<sup>14</sup> Miller entered the Union army on October 4, 1861, as a musician at age 16 and he subsequently served as a clerk at division headquarters.<sup>15</sup> He served in the army for a full three years.

According to Robert G. Carroon, author of a regimental history for the 61st Ohio, that unit belonged first to the Army of the Potomac and then to the Army of the Cumberland.<sup>16</sup> Having been organized on April 23, 1862, at Camp Chase in Columbus, Ohio, the 61<sup>st</sup> included many Irish-American, Scots-American, and German-American troops. Colonel Stephen Joseph McGroarty commanded the unit. There was a large range of ages for the troops in the 61st Ohio as the oldest man was 58 upon enlistment, ten were 17-year-olds, and three, including Z.T. Miller, were only 16 years old.<sup>17</sup>

On June 22, 1862, the 61st joined General John C. Fremont in western Virginia. By August 2, 1862, the 61st consisted of 568 enlisted men.<sup>18</sup> Their first battle occurred at Freeman's Ford on August 22.<sup>19</sup> On August 30, they participated in the Second Battle of Bull Run (Manassas), earning the praise of Major General Carl Schurz as the regiment displaying the "most commendable spirit."<sup>20</sup> Soon after, author Carroon writes, "On September [2, 1862], the regiment was engaged in a skirmish with the enemy at Fairfax Court House or Chantilly, Virginia."<sup>21</sup> The 61st was part of the 1st Brigade (Alexander Schimmelfennig), 3rd Division (Carl Schurz), and 11th Corps (Franz Sigel).<sup>22</sup> The 61st regiment then became part of the "rear guard" protecting Washington, DC.<sup>23</sup>

In late September 1862, Z.T. Miller began writing home to Ohio from Fairfax Court House, Virginia, describing his service there. Addressing his father, William Miller, on September 28, 1862, and writing his first letter from Fairfax Court House, Virginia, during the war, Miller encouraged his father not to join the army. The son wrote:

I just received your kind and welcomed letter this morning and was surprised to heare that you wanted to go into the army. Don't let such an idea as that get into your head. What could you do . . . you would have to work harder than you do at home . . . but do not ever think of going into the field. I have saw what a Qr. Mr [Quartermaster] has to undergo. . . . Besides if I and Lon [Miller's brother] are in the service that is enough out of one family, you stay at home and take care of the family and we will do the other part. . . . I don't



Photograph of Z.T. Miller  
as a soldier with the 61st  
Ohio Volunteer Regiment  
during the Civil War.  
Georgetown University  
Library, Helen King Boyer  
Collection

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Head Quarters 3rd Division, 11th Corps, Union  
Fairfax Court House, Nov 1<sup>st</sup> 1862.

Dear Father,

This pleasant afternoon I write my self,  
to drop you a few lines, as it may be the last time  
for a good while, we are going to move tomorrow at 3 o'clock  
to the Chancellorsville gap, about 30 miles from here, as to  
writing to me you can direct the same as before. It feels  
the same to me. I heard very good reports, this afternoon  
as if there was an engagement between Centerville.  
It is reported that the rebels captured a train and 2 or  
more that was sent to cattle station, the cut is in.  
I hear the engagement, tell mother to only send me one  
pair of long stockings as I may not get them.  
we have been quite busy today there were many orders  
come, for the troops to be ready to march. But there

One of Z.T. Miller's letters written while he was at  
Fairfax Court House, Virginia.

Georgetown University Library, Helen King Boyer Collection

like to see a man of your age go into the army when he has furnished means and two sons.<sup>24</sup>

In the same letter, Miller referred to his duty as part of the Union forces providing defenses near the capital of Washington, DC, and described his new scene of action, Fairfax Court House:

Since I wrote last we have moved from in front of Washington to Fairfax Court House. As soon as we arrived here we were paid for 4 months. I drew 40 dollars. The boys are in good spirits. They were all drunk they got whisky some way. I just come from Washington this morning. I saw all the fine buildings also Mrs. Abe Lincoln, she was out riding. I went to town with our sutler.<sup>25</sup>

In his second letter from Fairfax Court House, written on October 2, 1862, he informed his father that he is sending money home. The young man wrote:

Enclosed you will find 15 dollars that I make you a present of and will keep the rest so if you want me to come home that I can come, if not I will send you 15 more wich will make 30 dollars.<sup>26</sup>

Miller's third letter from Fairfax Court House, penned on October 5, 1862, and this time addressed to his mother, described at length the devastation wrought there by the Civil War:

Fairfax looks like as if one day a very lively little town. But to look at it now you would think it would never be as it once was. There is no fences around the houses and no glass in the windows. The churches all torn down. And only a few negros and some white women and children, the men have burnt all the fences down . . .<sup>27</sup>

Miller reported seeing a woman who:

. . . likes to talk to a couple of secesh officers that run around on patrol but she is a good union woman. She dresses in mourning . . . I suppose for her husband. I have seen but one woman since I have been here but what was dressed in mourning. This war will make a many a home desolate.<sup>28</sup>

Miller revealed that the carnage of battle was not far from Fairfax Court House:

I just now saw a man who had been shot 4 times in the same battle and is not dead yet. He has one arm off[f] and was shot twice through to the other. And one ball went in his right cheek just in front of his ear and come out the other side. He is going to join his regiment if he cannot get on some General's staff.<sup>29</sup>

The young Miller took a short trip towards the Confederate lines, writing:

I have returned after taking a very nice ride on a mule. . . . I went out the Centreville Road to where our regiment is on picket. There was 5 prisoners brought in just as I was going out. They looked very hard. They look like a set of men that had been working in a lime kiln with the exception of shoes.<sup>30</sup>

Discussing rumors about the Union leadership, he wrote:

There is a rumor afloat that General Frank Sigel has been transferred to a command in K[entuck]y. Also that General [Carl] Schurz is going with him, and that Sigel is going to take all the Ohio troops with him. I hope so. If Sigel leaves, I . . . do not know what will become of his corps. They all think so much of him. . . . I hope he will go. Then I will know that our home will be safe. I only hope Schurz will go too. I do not want to leave Sigel['s] command. . . . One of the men in our regiment told me that Steve McGroarty told him that we were going to K[entuck]y with Sigel. . . . I heard that [Nathaniel P.] Banks or Sedgewick [John Sedgwick] was to take command of the Eleventh Corps in place of Sigel.<sup>31</sup>

In the same letter Miller commented on news from home:

I got a good long letter from Johnnie last night. I was quite amused to hear that Beck [?] had commenced his career already. . . . Such ornaments as ladies have slipped my mind altogether. I wonder if Miamisburg is as fast as it used to be. Well I expect so.<sup>32</sup>

Writing again from Fairfax Court House, this time, in his fourth letter, on October 7, 1862, to his sisters, Miller noted:

We are yet a[t] Fairfax, and have scarcely enough to do to keep away the blues. The Major is in Washington and we are alone. This morning the General and his wife & Mrs. Sigel & General Garfield went out towards Centreville.<sup>33</sup>

Regarding clothing, a sometimes scarce item during war, Miller explained:

I was out to our regiment this morning and got me some new cloth[e]s. I got me a new suit out and out, except shoes & cap. I have got that old cap I had when I was home. The pair of shoes that Balm give me the day I left, beside a pair of good boots that a boy give me. I got them half souled and they will last me all winter. I have got 4 good shirts, 2 pair drawers & a good pair of pants also and a good overcoat and 3 pairs of stockings.<sup>34</sup>

Death was not far from Miller's mind as he wrote, "One of our men in co B died last night very suddenly. He was from Dayton, [Ohio]. Bob Martin was his name."<sup>35</sup>

Holding General Sigel in high esteem, Miller commented:

Nothing is going on except about Gen. Sigel's resignation. It is all the go now. His men does not like to heare of it. They almost worship him and it makes him feel bad that he cannot have more men and a separate command. I think he will get a separate command soon.<sup>36</sup>

Miller, like many other soldiers far from home, became home sick: "Well girls I am almost tired of this kind of life. I wish I was home. Has Father got out of the notion of going to war"?<sup>37</sup> Further, Miller revealed:

It seems to me like a bird in a cage. I am continually wanting to be running around. And be free as I was once before. Considering all the hardships. But I think I will soon get accustomed to it . . .<sup>38</sup>

Miller sought to send home a photograph of himself: "When I can go to Washington I will get mine struck and send it home although I expect you heare enough of me with out seeing me."<sup>39</sup>

Miller's next letter from Fairfax Court House, addressing his mother on October 13, 1862, shared his boredom at camp. He said that writing to family:

. . . is almost all I have to pass away the idle hours of the day. That make[s] me write so often . . . The days are so much more dull as they begin to get cold. I got my overcoat fixed last night. I have plenty of cloth[e]s and plenty to eat and that is all I can wish for. I have dismissed the idea of coming home

from my mind. I sent father some more money yesterday.<sup>40</sup>

The Union soldier turned to news of reinforcements, saying:

We are getting some more men in our Div. a Wisconsin Regt. with 1040 men strong. The general is very much pleased at it. He is personally acquainted with most of the men, they come from the same place that he did, and come expressly from him. The general went out to greet them and make a little speech to them.<sup>41</sup>

The young Northern lad still held out hope for a quick end to the war. He noted:

I was in hopes that the war would be over this winter but if we don't move faster than we do now we will have to stay all winter. I am glad to hear that they are doing so well in K[entucky]. If they succeed well there & McClelland does well in V[irginia] we may soon see the end of it.<sup>42</sup>

Despite boredom and hardship, Miller was thankful for the things he had at Fairfax Court House:

I just got up from a nice dish of Potatoes & Mackaronas. I am living quite high about this time. I almost wish we would move from this place. I am getting tired of laying in one place so long. . . . I must ride out to our regiment to take a letter to Col. McGroarty.<sup>43</sup>

Apparently, Z.T. Miller's brother Lon had left the army. However, Z.T. speculated about his sibling's return to active service. In his letter, dated October 13, 1862, to his parents, Miller reported that:

Steve McGroarty just told me that I should telegraph to Lon. Tell him to come on that the thought of Governor Todd was in Washington & he could be reinstated and get back to be capt of the company. I don't want Lon to go soldiering. . . . He would do much better and it would be much better for his health.<sup>44</sup>

In this very same letter of October 16, 1862, Miller signed as "Ast Clerk, Hd. Qr. 3rd Division, Army of the Potomac, Virginia." The young assistant clerk reported:

Our Division is being filled up. One new regiment came yesterday. We have three new regiments in our corps now. And we are expecting more every day. One regiment was raised in Wisconsin expressly for Genl. Schurz who is well worthy the command of them. Their Brass Band serenaded the General last night. They plaid a few pieces and then went in the house and took supper. I thought the general would make a speech but he did not. Some time ago I sent you the generals picture. I have not heard whether you got it or not.<sup>45</sup>

As Miller continued, he described his new means of transportation:

Well mother last night the Qr. Mr. [Quartermaster] gave me the donk[e]y that I ride, if I would tend to him, feed him, and water him. Also I have a good saddle and it will be very nice to ride on a march. It appears as if the major is very much interested in my well fare. He wanted to know if I would ride with him in the field and be his staff. Nothing would do him the other day but me to ride the mule up before Mrs. Schurz and the General.<sup>46</sup>

As usual, the weather was a common topic of conversation:

These cold mornings make our fingers stiff that we cannot write. The days are getting a little more pleasant. I almost dred for winter to come. It will make me feel glad one way. It will do a great deal to help our cause along. It will freeze out these half starved rebels and may do something to end this war. I am in hopes that it will get cold soon for that purpose. Before they get to Richmond for then they can get supplied.<sup>47</sup>

Miller turned his thoughts to the efforts to free the slaves:

I think the fighting will be over by the 1<sup>st</sup> of next January so we can let all the slaves run. We shurly have to whip them [the Confederates] before that time or Congress cannot carry out her plans. You never told me what you thought about the [Emancipation] Proclamation<sup>48</sup> yet. . . . I should like to know what is the opinion of the people around town.<sup>49</sup>

Miller sent home some unusual souvenirs:

Enclosed you will find 4 postage stamps from Hanover, Germany. They are quite a curiosity. They came on a letter to our clerk in the office here. I want you to keep all the little relics that I send home.... I sent you a paper when we were at Morefield. Also some rebel postage stamps and envelope[s].... They will be nice to have about the house as the person said when she bought the wheelbarrow.<sup>50</sup>

He pointed with pride to one of his duties as assistant clerk:

Father sometime ago you might have seen the report of Genl. Schurz to Maj. General in some paper. If you did preserve it, for I sat two long days to copy it so it could be printed. It is a very good letter.<sup>51</sup>

Miller wondered about the postal system as he wrote:

I think I made a very good investment this morning. It was rather small but good. I bought ten postage stamps that had no glue on them for 25 cents. I wrote to[o] many letters. It costs me too much. Well another mail has come and yet I get no letter. How strange it is. It cannot be that you have quit writing.<sup>52</sup>

In his next dispatch home, on October 20, 1862, Miller's patriotism had become stronger:

Father, I never intended to run away but once, and that was when you all appeared to be so down hearted, about the war news and could I have got away I would have come as shure as my heart beats in my bosom. But I have banished all such notions from my mind, as all hopes of coming home soon are done away with.... I am content to stay where I am.<sup>53</sup>

Discussing troop movements, he stated, "They are on picket on the road that goes to Centreville. The enemy was at Stone Bridge, 2 miles ... There is ample force at Centreville to give them a warm reception when they come."<sup>54</sup> The Union army was organizing itself in preparation for marching away from Fairfax Court House. Miller anticipated marching orders:

General Sigel['s] command is being filled up. He has quite a number of new regiments attached to his corps. He has seven new regiments, five from New York & one from Mass & the 26th Wisconsin, raised expressly for Genl. Schurz. One of the clerks at Sigel's headquarters told me that the Tenth Ohio was coming out here. But I see in the paper that they were cut up very bad in K[entuck]y.... I am affraid some of our boys will have been made to bite the dust. But the best consolation is that they are doing it in a good cause, a cause, a flame, that has been kindled by our own. . . . Father, never to be extinguished. Our cause is growing brighter every day.<sup>55</sup>

The youthful Miller added, "Genl Schurz['s] . . . children are going to

have a festival this evening. The major has an invitation.... He laughs just like a little boy. He often tells me he will just be like a father to me.”<sup>56</sup>

He reported clashes with nearby Confederates, writing:

It is reported that General [Julius] Stahel at Centreville has captured 80 rebel cavalry. . . . Our wagon master wants me to go out the Centreville with him to day. I do not think I will go as the mornings are getting very cold.... It was reported that the Rebels were at Bull Run. I did not learn whether it was the whole force or a few gu[e]rillas.<sup>57</sup>

The young Ohioan spoke of the need for blankets:

Our regiment is drawing new Blankets and Rubber Blankets. They were needed very much. Our boys threw away all their blankets . . . when it was warm. I would have been minus a blanket if I had not have picked one up at the fight at Freemans Ford, where General [Henry] Bohlen was killed.<sup>58</sup>

On the politics of generalship, Miller wrote:

The Gen[e]ral & Major has gone out riding. I think they went to see General [Julius] Stahel at Centreville. Yesterday I happened to catch sight of a letter that General [Irvin] McDowell wrote to General Schurz, denying that General Schurz saw him in full retreat at the Battle of Bull Run.<sup>59</sup>

Further, Miller pondered the end of the war, explaining rather optimistically:

It is not likely that we will stay here very long. We are keeping everything in readiness as we do not know what moment we may go. I think it depends on the movement of Genl. McClellan. If he moves down we will also, so as to keep them out of Richmond. . . . It may be that they are keeping McClellan in check by building large camp fires and putting up tents as they did at Bull run with their wooden cannon. I like to heare of them getting their just dues in K[entuck]y.... I believe the fighting will be over against Christmas. If it is all over with and the men returns those that are left. What a happy day that would be all over the United States. And what a day of sorrow to those who have lost a member of the family.<sup>60</sup>

In his subsequent letter, on October 30, 1862, Miller wrote:

Nothing new has happened since I wrote except the change of encampments.

The 2nd Division on the east side of town and the 3rd Div. on the west. The troops are in very good health far as I can learn, expecting every day to make a move south.... It will not take us by surprise for we have had orders to hold our selves in readiness all the time. All the horses and mules are being shoed and from all appearances a move is at hand. I am expecting to heare of McClellan striking a blow. I see his army has crossed the Potomac. He cannot do it too soon for if the rebels get to Sta[u]nton we will not get them out soon. I am affraid we are .... going to have a hard time of it this winter as there is to be a winter campaign.<sup>61</sup>

Miller shared with his family a fascinating encounter with history. During his stay at Fairfax Court House, Miller and some of his fellow soldiers lived in the very house of the family of James William Jackson, who shot Elmer E. Ellsworth in Alexandria, Virginia. (Ellsworth was the first Union casualty in the Civil War.) Miller indicated:

Well Mother we are living in a house owned by the widow Jno [sic; James William] Jackson, the man who killed Col. El[l]sworth in Alexandria. I never found it out untill a few days ago. Her and her children dress in deep mourning. She tells us she is a good union woman. It is the way the people do out here. It is just as it happens if the union army is here they are union people. If the secesh is here they are secesh. They are better secesh than union. I[t] does not make any difference. Our soldiers have to guard their property.<sup>62</sup>

Miller criticized the United States' federal government on two points: leadership and supplies. Regarding the former, he wrote, "I begin to think the men at the head of our government has not got sense enough to conduct the war."<sup>63</sup> Regarding the latter, he spoke of the scarcity of blankets:

We have been quite busy today copying orders. I did think we were going to get tents but I see we are not. They cannot be furnished. Our boys have not slept in anything but their shelter tents since we left Sperryville. And quite a number have none of them. They threw them away on the marches when it was warm. Now they suffer with the cold for want of blankets and tents. I think it is no wonder our government is short of blankets. It is keeping both armies in blankets. First they give them to our men and then they are thrown away. Then picked up by the rebels, who are glad to get them. Our regiment is going to draw new blankets as soon as they can get them.<sup>64</sup>

Miller indicated that the soldiers were receiving rations of whiskey:

Well Mother they are issuing whisk[e]y to the soldiers as part of their rations. I have drawn none as yet but will as soon as it come again. The major and the clerk (Nachtigall) is to drink my share between them. The major said he was going to have it all, but I think best to divide it. . . . I will set those to drinking who would not otherwise. Some have not the money to get it and they have to do without it. They may gain some recruits by it. . . . I have heard doctors say it was very good for a wounded man. If each one has some in his canteen i[t] will save the doctors a great deal of trouble. But I am affraid i[t] will never be had when it is most needed.<sup>65</sup>

He noted the activities of a soldier from near his home:

Old Alf Thompson is the only one in the regiment that come from where I live. He is looking very well. He drinks but very little if any at all. I have not saw him fight since we have been in Va. He was on guard at our headquarters this morning. He has got plenty of money, and has plenty to eat.<sup>66</sup>

Of Union dignitaries visiting the front lines, he wrote:

This evening secrytary [Salmon P.] Chase & [Edwin M.] Staunton come out here. They are going to attend the muster tomorrow. They fired a salute when they come into town. It raised quite an excitement as it was not known what it was. The 61st Ohio was on picket and they were all in arms. . . . The band come down and played a few pieces. I think the secretary made a speech. I heard them give three hearty cheers. I suppose we will have a big time tomorrow. All the men will turn out. Sick and well to be mustered for pay.<sup>67</sup>

In a letter dated late October 1862, his sister, Miller detailed regimental preparations at length:

There has been quite a change in the programe lately. Regiments are being changed to different brigades and divisions in order to make room for the seven new regiments that have come in and to distribute them around in the different divisions so each man will have a share. We got five new regt. in our division, the 47th Penn, 136th N.Y., 159th N.Y., 119th N.Y., 26th Wisconsin besides three old regiments. The 61st Ohio was to go into the 2nd Div & 2nd Brigade. But the order was countermanded. All the Ohio troops except 2 regiments have been put into the 1st Division under Genl Stahel.<sup>68</sup>

Focusing more on the organization of the army, he wrote:

The 61st is going to be filled up with 550 new men and McGroarty is going to be made colonel. There was a meeting of all the officers in Genl. Schurz[']s Division this morning to acquaint the old officers to with the new. I think we will have a fine division after this and as good as it is fine, with as gallant a commander at the head as there is in the corps.<sup>69</sup>

Returning to the topic of his brother Lon's military experience, he reported:

They got to talking about Lon[']s case in which the general said the best thing and the shortest way was to give him good recommendation and get the Governor of Ohio to reinstate him and date his commission from the date of the first commission. I think the latter plan will be will be adopted. Then we will have quite a nice little pile of money coming to him, and will have had a furlough home.<sup>70</sup>

Recruits were deemed highly important, as Miller reported, "Col. Steve wants a furlough for one week to go and get the men to fill up his regt. The Genl told him that he had no objections if he left the major in command."<sup>71</sup> He wondered about the military draft in the North:

I thought the draft would create some excitements, but I have heard of no one resisting it in Ohio. I am affraid it did not catch enough of the [Clement L.] Vallandigham Democrats.... I am at a loss to know where John Shehan obtained enough money to buy a substitute. If you can learn what he give for one I would like to know.<sup>72</sup>

In a note circa October 1862, to his sisters, Miller described more of his experiences, including a visit to Fairfax Station:

Just after returning from a long ride to Fairfax Station, I sit down to write you. I had quite a pleasant time. F.S. . . . [is] . . . south of this place on the railroad that goes to Manases and Strausburg. The station its self had been burnt some time ago. There is where we get our forage. It saves us the trouble of going to Washington after it. We run around on the little by roads and make the trip about ten miles in length. On our way back we stopped at a farm house and got some butter milk, and saw where a Georgia regiment encamped all last winter. After we had got through drinking our milk we asked what was the cost. The woman said it was ten cents for seven glasses, which we drank between us. We handed her ten cents in postage currency but she had to ask how much it was. Why, said we, there is a mark on it. She said she did

not understand figures. There were five children in the house who looked at us as if they had never saw any body before. While the baby cried because it was afraid of us. The children were dressed very odd. The old lady had on a man[']s coat. I saw no man. I suppose he is in the southern army. . . . I saw a man who had been in the rebel army and had to continue to wear the clothes as he had not the funds to purchase others. He looked fiendish, as all the secesh out here do.<sup>73</sup>

### On freed slaves:

Last night I saw a family of negro[e]s who had made their escape from home on the Rappahannoc River. They had been put into jail to keep them from running away, but they broke out and come inside of our lines. They say there is some rebels along the river but they are making their way to Richmond. They thought they (Rebs) would make a stand on the Rappid Ann River but I think not.<sup>74</sup>

### Miller shared his opinion about the possibility of the Rebels entering Union territory again:

The report that the rebels are going into Pennsylvania, I think is just a sham, while they make good their retreat to Richmond. If it should be the case they will get back. If not, they will not when McClellan pushed them. I think we will fall in front of them and catch them that way with Sigel in front of them and McClellan in the rear. I don't think they will get away. We have got no McDowell to let them slip now. I think all is working well now. This coming winter will do half of our fighting, and I long to see it come.<sup>75</sup>

### He returned to the subject of the Emancipation Proclamation:

The president[']s proclamation seems to trouble the southern people. It pleases me to see that it is doing so well. It appears to be gaining more friends every day. When it first come out I did not like it very much but we have done more since the proclamation than we did for the twelve months before that.<sup>76</sup>

### Miller went on to say:

We expected to go to Centreville and relive Genl Stahel but I guess we will remain where we are. Genl Stahel & Genral Schurz had a private interview this afternoon. I begin to think we will move no farther south than we are now. There will be one more big struggle in va [Virginia] and one or the other army will gain a big victory. I see in the papers that they are going to

go into Pennsylvania in force. I only hope they will. They will get a warmer reception than they did the first time. Pennsylvania has suffered more than Ohio has, for all they had a big army close by. I don't know of any rebels getting into Ohio but once, and I believe they will never get as close soon again. Some time ago I wrote home that I thought that Miamisburg was very patriotic. It did not appear to last long. Almost every letter . . . [mentions] . . . the boys being taken prisoner or deserting.<sup>77</sup>

In his last letter from Fairfax Court House, dated November 1, 1862, Miller reported:

We are going to move tomorrow . . . to Thoroughfare Gap about 30 miles from here. This afternoon as if there was an engagement, toward Centreville. It is reported that the rebels captured a train and . . . men that was sent to Cattlet Station, to cut wood. I heard the engagement.<sup>78</sup>

He mentioned one last review before his fellow troops and he left Fairfax Court House:

We had a grand review yesterday. Ex [Governor Salmon P.] Chase of Ohio was out. We had quite a fine time. The governor looks well. All was life in town. The Bands playing & Drums beating. They fired a salute, which raised quite an excitement. He made a little speech to the 61st Regt. . . . Genl Schurz also made a little speech. This is all at present. I will write every time I get a chance.<sup>79</sup>

On November 2, 1862, the 61st Ohio assisted in a march to Centreville.<sup>80</sup> On December 10, Miller's unit left Fairfax Court House and marched to Fredericksburg.<sup>81</sup> Miller and his fellow soldiers wintered at Stafford Court House.<sup>82</sup> The 61st Ohio subsequently fought in Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Missionary Ridge, Chattanooga, the Atlanta Campaign, and the March to the Sea.<sup>83</sup> The 61st Ohio was particularly effective in the western theatre of war.<sup>84</sup> The 61st Ohio's last battle was at Bentonville, North Carolina. Soon thereafter, the regiment moved to Goldsboro, North Carolina, and merged with the 82nd Ohio. Z.T. Miller mustered out of the Union army on October 4, 1864, at Atlanta, Georgia when his term expired.<sup>85</sup> The war took its toll on the volunteers and the 61st lost many men. Miller, fortunately, was one of those survivors who returned to his family in Ohio.

After the Civil War, Z.T. Miller worked as a telegraph operator first

in Dayton, Ohio, and then in Cleveland. He married Catherine King and moved in 1873 to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he became a noted homeopathic doctor and taught at the Carnegie Institute of Technology. He died at the age of 60.<sup>86</sup> From his detailed record of his exploits during the Civil War in general and, in particular, during his brief stay at Fairfax Court House, Miller's voice has become part of Civil War history.

*The author would like to thank Mr. Nicholas B. Scheetz, Manuscripts Librarian, Georgetown University Library Special Collections Research Center in Washington, DC, for his guidance. Mr. Scheetz assigned the author to catalog the Helen King Boyer Collection in 2001. The author would also like to thank Ms. Helen King Boyer, who donated the Z.T. Miller letters to Georgetown University. The author would like to thank Rev. Joseph A. Haller, S.J., of the Jesuit community at Georgetown University, who helped acquire the Z.T. Miller letters and provided the author with various articles about different aspects of the Civil War.*

## Endnotes

- 1 Nan Netherton, Ruth Preston Rose, David L. Meyer, Peggy Talbot Wagner, and Mary Elizabeth Cawley DiVincenzo, *Fairfax, Virginia: A City Traveling Through Time* (Fairfax, VA: History of the City of Fairfax Round Table, 1997), 3.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid., 8.
- 4 Ibid., 11.
- 5 Ibid., 24.
- 6 Nan Netherton, Donald Sweig, Janice Artemel, Patricia Hickin, and Patrick Reed, *Fairfax County, Virginia: A History* (Fairfax, VA: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, 1978), 319.
- 7 Netherton et al, *Fairfax, Virginia: A City Traveling Through Time*, 19.
- 8 Netherton et al, *Fairfax County, Virginia: A History*, 320.
- 9 Netherton et al, *Fairfax, Virginia: A City Traveling Through Time*, 21.
- 10 Netherton et al, *Fairfax County, Virginia: A History*, 322.
- 11 Netherton et al, *Fairfax, Virginia: A City Traveling Through Time*, 24.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 *Official Roster of the Soldiers of the State of Ohio in the War of the Rebellion:*

- 1861-1866 (Akron, OH: Werner P. and M. Company, 1887). This source was provided by the Ohio Historical Society. It is also reprinted in the following work: Patrick D. Kelly, *A Story of Prove Loyalty: The Sixty-First Ohio* (M.A. Thesis, Kent State University, 1997), 178. In a letter dated October 14, 2008, to the author from Thomas J. Rieder, Reference Archivist, Ohio Historical Society, concluded that Z.T. Miller, Zachary T. Miller, and Taylor Miller were the same person.
- 15 *Official Roster*.
  - 16 Robert G. Carroon, editor, *From Freeman's Ford to Bentonville: The 61<sup>st</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry* (Shippensburg, PA: Burd Street Press, 1998), 1.
  - 17 Kelly, 12.
  - 18 Carroon, 2.
  - 19 Frederick Stephens Wallace, "The Sixty-First Ohio Volunteers: 1861-1865" in *From Freeman's Ford to Bentonville: The 61<sup>st</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry*, 19.
  - 20 Carroon, 5.
  - 21 Ibid.
  - 22 Wallace, 21.
  - 23 Kelly, 37.
  - 24 Helen King Boyer Collection, Box 1 Folder 21 (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Library, Special Collections Research Center).
  - 25 Ibid.
  - 26 Helen King Boyer Collection, Box 1, Folder 22.
  - 27 Helen King Boyer Collection, Box 1, Folder 23.
  - 28 Ibid.
  - 29 Ibid.
  - 30 Ibid.
  - 31 Ibid.
  - 32 Ibid.
  - 33 Helen King Boyer Collection, Box 1, Folder 24.
  - 34 Ibid.
  - 35 Ibid.
  - 36 Ibid.
  - 37 Ibid.
  - 38 Ibid.
  - 39 Ibid.
  - 40 Helen King Boyer Collection, Box 1, Folder 25.
  - 41 Ibid.
  - 42 Ibid.
  - 43 Ibid.
  - 44 Ibid.
  - 45 Helen King Boyer Collection, Box 1, Folder 26.
  - 46 Ibid.
  - 47 Ibid.
  - 48 Lincoln issued a preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862

warning the Southern states that if they did not return to the Union, their slaves would be freed on January 1, 1863. *The Civil War Society's Encyclopedia of the Civil War* (NY: Portland House, 1997).

- 49 Helen King Boyer Collection, Box 1, Folder 26.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Helen King Boyer Collection, Box 1, Folder 27.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Helen King Boyer Collection, Box 1, Folder 28.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Ibid.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 Ibid.
- 67 Ibid.
- 68 Helen King Boyer Collection, Box 1, Folder 29.
- 69 Ibid.
- 70 Ibid.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 Helen King Boyer Collection, Box 1, Folder 30.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 Ibid.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 Ibid.
- 78 Helen King Boyer Collection, Box 1, Folder 31.
- 79 Ibid.
- 80 Kelly, 38.
- 81 Carroon, 5.
- 82 Ibid.
- 83 Carroon, 1.
- 84 Kelly, 163.
- 85 *Official Roster; Kelly, 178.*
- 86 Helen King Boyer Collection, Box 11, Folder 3, clipped newspaper obituary for Z.T. Miller.



*A photograph taken on the lawn on the river side of Woodlawn circa 1886. Standing at left: William Hunter, Mary Washington Mason Hunter, their daughter Annie. Seated in striped dress: Sarah, wife of Otis Mason, who is standing behind her. Daughter Sarah Elizabeth on left; Emily Tufton on right. Seated: Eben and Elizabeth Mason. Standing behind them is William L. Mason, son of Eben's brother William, who died when his son was very young. William was raised by Eben and Elizabeth. Seated at far right: John and Rachel Mason. The African-Americans may be members of the Dent and Brooks families, who were listed in the 1870 census as living in the Mason household.*

Courtesy of Woodlawn, a historic site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation

# The 1864 Diary of Ebenezer E. Mason

Transcription and Notes by  
Susan Hellman

*Susan Hellman is a sixth-generation native of the Woodlawn/Mount Vernon neighborhood. These ties motivated her to transcribe this diary, as many of her family members interacted with the Mason family. For example, her great-grandfather, Frank Wilkinson, and her great-great uncle, J. Norman Gibbs, were two of the men appointed to appraise E.E. Mason's estate after his death in 1910. She thanks Lewis Leigh, Jr., for allowing the Historical Society access to the diary. Mrs. Hellman earned degrees from Duke University (undergraduate) and the University of Virginia (graduate). She was a historian in the Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning, a historian at the FCPL's Virginia Room, and currently is Woodlawn Plantation's deputy director.*

Ebenezer Erskine Mason was born on August 25, 1829, in Washington County, Maine. He was the son of John and Rachel Mason, who purchased Woodlawn mansion and 546.30 surrounding acres from Paul Hillman Troth in 1850. Troth was a partner in Troth Gillingham and Company, a Quaker-owned lumber firm that had purchased the Woodlawn estate from Lorenzo Lewis in 1846. The Troths and Gillinghams partitioned the property in 1848, with Troth receiving the portion including the mansion. John and Rachel Mason lived in Woodlawn mansion from 1850 until their deaths, John's in 1888 and Rachel's in 1889. John and Rachel Mason had five children: Ebenezer, Otis, William, Annie, and Mary. Otis was a well-known ethnologist who became a curator at the Smithsonian Institution, after many years teaching at his alma mater, Columbian University, now George



Woodlawn tract purchased by Eben Mason in November of 1864.  
 Fairfax County Circuit Court Archives, Deed Book E4: 202-204

Washington University. He also founded the Anthropological Society of Washington. There is no known link between this Mason family and the well-known George Mason family of Gunston Hall.

Ebenezer, known as Eben, purchased 113 acres of the Woodlawn tract for \$2500 from his father John Mason in November of 1864. This farm was in the southeast quadrant of the intersection of what is now Richmond Highway (Route 1) and the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, formerly the intersection of the Alexandria and Accotink Turnpike and "the old mill road." This property was adjacent to George Washington's Grist Mill, which Troth Gillingham had reserved in the 1850 deed to John Mason. Eben Mason's farm extended northeast along Route 1 to just past Cooper Road. His neighbor at that end of the farm was Courtland Lukens.

Mason married Elizabeth Thompson on December 20, 1854 in Eastport, Maine. They spent their honeymoon at Woodlawn. Mason was a well-respected citizen of Fairfax County, active in civic affairs. He was elected a representative to the 1861 Wheeling Convention, which was organized to discuss the formation of a pro-Union government for Virginia. In 1863 Mason was commissioned a Justice of the County Court. His family founded the Woodlawn Baptist Church, holding services in Woodlawn mansion before the church itself was built on Mason-donated land in 1872. Mason served as Superintendent of the Woodlawn Baptist Church Sunday School for over 51 years. His wife Elizabeth taught Sunday school there, and also taught public school. Mason served as a school trustee in the Mount Vernon District from 1870-72, was a member of the School Board in 1876, and served as Clerk for the school district in the 1870s. Along with his neighbor, Courtland Lukens, Mason donated land on the Accotink Turnpike for Woodlawn School. He was a charter member of the Woodlawn Farmer's Club, as well as a charter member of the Woodlawn Horse Company, an organization formed to reduce horse stealing in the area. In 1878 he was elected the first president of an early iteration of the Fairfax County Historical Society.

Eben Mason died on June 18, 1910, and was greatly mourned in the community. Period newspapers contain many testaments to the man's character and integrity. His wife Elizabeth died three years later,



*Independence Hall, the home of Eben Mason in Fairfax County, Virginia, circa 1940.*

Courtesy of Woodlawn, a historic site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation

on March 24, 1913. Both are buried at the Woodlawn Baptist Church cemetery, next to John and Rachel Mason. Eben Mason's farm was sold intact after his death, and remained intact until 1939. His home was probably on the twenty-two acres sold to the Future Farmers of America in 1939.

In 1864, when the diary was written, the country was embroiled in the Civil War. For much of the war, the Woodlawn area was between armies. The Union occupied Alexandria; the Confederates frequently held Accotink, which was an important settlement at that time. Both sides raided the local farms for food, horses, and even men. The Woodlawn area had strong Northern sympathies. The Masons were from New England. The many Quakers who settled in the area were mainly from New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and were strongly opposed to slavery. Paul Hillman Troth was captured and imprisoned by the Confederates at least twice during the war. Throughout all this turmoil, Eben Mason manages to run his farm and have some semblance of a normal life.



*Woodlawn Baptist Church, 1974.*

Courtesy of Woodlawn, a historic site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation



*The gravestones of (at left) John and Rachel Mason and (at right) Eben and Lizzie Mason, who are buried in the Mason family plot at Woodlawn Baptist Church, Alexandria, Virginia.*

Photograph taken by author on June 3, 2010

# DIARY

NB I have transcribed using Mason's spelling and punctuation.

Diary of E.E. Mason

Fairfax Co. Virginia

Jan. to Aug. 1864. Member

Accotink Home Guards. Union

10/77 [arrow pointing to >] \$65000 [that may be \$65.00. The middle 0 is small]

Inside front cover:

E.E. Mason

Fairfax

County

Virginia

On the facing page are some computations:

75

15

525

75

12.75

1000

2.75

written next to that is: 77-D-30

107765

These may also not be original to the book.

Frontispiece: the lovely "Pocket Diary 1864, Published annually for the trade. 1864." It is in all caps, has a sun setting behind mountains, some Art Nouveau-ish tendrils etc. Mason wrote his name, Ffx Co VA (as above) on the facing page.

Next page (i) has an 1864 calendar. Mason's name, etc., on facing page.

Next page left side (ii): rates of postage; right side (iii): a table of stamp duties.

The following two pages (iv-vii) are stamp duties continued.

Next page left side (viii): Eclipses in 1864; List of Sundays. Right side (ix): Almanac for 1864 Jan and Feb. More almanac (x-xv) follows.

Diary part begins on page to the right of xv. It has three days per leaf. The day at the top of each page has the entire date. Following two days are day and number only, not month and year:

FRIDAY, JANUARY 1, 1864.

The morning was cloudy, cleared off fair, and cold in the afternoon, spent the day at home.

SATURDAY 2

Very cold all day, spent the day at home. Issued a warrant against Wm Holland<sup>1</sup> in the afternoon for striking John Hollands wife.

SUNDAY 3

Morning cold moderated in the afternoon walked to Alexandria, and called on Mrs Harper in the evening.

MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 1864.

Went to Washington called on Newton Harper in Carroll prison<sup>2</sup>, nothing effected, went again to see Mrs Harper, snowed all day. Bought an overcoat and pair of gloves.

TUESDAY 6

Weather drizzly rain, resumed my duties in the state senate, went to a public meeting in the evening had quite a spicy time

WEDNESDAY 6

Weather cold and cloudy, nothing of interest occurred.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 1864.

Weather cold. Snowed in the evening, went out to west end<sup>3</sup>, searched the County records for Fathers deed, found it all right, went to the theatre in the evening.

FRIDAY 8

Weather more moderate, settled Fathers internal revenue tax bill, Called on Mrs Harper, And old Mr Stoutenburg, in the evening nothing of interest occurred.

SATURDAY 9

Weather clear and cold, senate was not in session, walked out to West end in the afternoon, in the evening joined the U.L.<sup>4</sup>

SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 1864.

Morning very cold. Milder during the day, attended Methodist meeting morning and evening, called on Holsapple's<sup>5</sup> in the afternoon.

MONDAY 11

Weather Moderated, senate met, Sale of property for insurrectionary tax took place, attended a Union meeting, in the evening.

TUESDAY 12

Weather Fair and pleasant, attended the District convention, everything passed off pleasantly, called on Mrs Harper in the evening.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 1864.

Weather mild and pleasant, resumed my duties in the senate, from which I was excused the day before, spent the evening with the Lieut Gov, nothing of particular interest occurred.

THURSDAY 14

Weather mild, disagreeable underfoot, Senate adjourned over till Monday, got up a certificate in favor of J.N. Harper spent the evening at Mrs Harpers.

FRIDAY 15

Weather pleasant, nothing worthy of note took place, went to the theatre in the evening.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 16, 1864.

Weather mild and pleasant. Went down home in the afternoon, nothing transpired worthy of note.

SUNDAY 17

Weather raw and cloudy, left for Alexandria in the afternoon, spent the evening with John Hauxhurst.<sup>6</sup>

MONDAY 18

Weather disagreeable and rainy. attended the Fairfax county Court, in the evening went to the Union League.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 1864.

Weather clear and pleasant. senate not in session, in the evening went to see the Panorama of the rebellion.

WEDNESDAY 20

Weather mild and pleasant. senate met at 12 O clock, in the evening attended a lecture by a colored man.

THURSDAY 21

Weather very pleasant. Elections held to elect delegates to the constitutional convention, called on Mrs Harper in the evening

FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 1864.

Weather fine and pleasant. nothing worthy of note occurred. Went to Dick Parkers in the evening.

SATURDAY 23

Weather very pleasant, Met Uncle Larkin spent the afternoon & evening with him.

#### SUNDAY 24

Weather very mild, went to the Presbyterian church in the morning and afternoon, in the attended the Methodist church. [word missing]

#### MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 1864.

Weather still continues mild and pleasant. bought a pair of boots, in the evening went to the Union League.

#### TUESDAY 26

Weather very mild and pleasant, nothing of interest transpired went to the Theatre in the evening.

#### WEDNESDAY 27

Weather mild and pleasant as Summer, in the evening went to hear the Black Swan<sup>7</sup> sing, was very much [word missing] with the performance

#### THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 1864

Weather remarkably pleasant nothing worthy of record, till about midnight when the explosion of a steam tug took place near fort Washington. Went to theatre in evening.

#### FRIDAY 29

Weather still continues pleasant, wrote an article for the state journal on the election of U.S. Senator in the evening went to see Macbeth played.

#### SATURDAY 30

Weather cloudy and raw, nothing of particular interest occurred, Called on Mrs Harper in the evening Mr Harper still in prison.

#### SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 1864.

Weather cloudy but mild, finished reading, Alone a novel by Mrs Harland<sup>8</sup>, went to a missionary meeting afternoon and evening.

#### MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1

Weather drizzly rain, paid my subscription to the missionary cause, nothing of particular interest occurred.

## TUESDAY 2

Weather mild but cloudy, election for U.S. Senator did not come off, owing to the absence of two Senators.

## WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1864.

Weather fair and pleasant, drew my pay as Seargt at arms, paid my board bill,

## THURSDAY 4

Weather continues Pleasant and fair, My Wife<sup>9</sup> stopped and spent the day and night with me, on her way to Georgetown to see her brother.

## FRIDAY 5

Weather mild and Fair. Lizzie went to Georgetown, Went to hear Richelieu played in the evening.

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1864.

Weather cloudy with appearance of rain, went to Battery Cameron in the evening

## SUNDAY 7

Weather cloudy and raw after a rain, attended religious service morning and evening, rained again in the night.

## MONDAY 8

Weather fair and pleasant, went back to Alexandria, legislature adjourned sine die. Went to hear Clarke in the evening in the american cousin

## TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1864.

Weather pleasant, settled my affairs, and went back to Georgetown, spent part of the day in Congress,

## WEDNESDAY 10

Weather clear and cold, went over to Washington visited the Smithsonian institute.

#### THURSDAY 11

Weather clear and cold, went to the review of the brigade, called at Phillip's in the evening

#### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1864.

Weather fair and pleasant, left for Alexandria. Lizzie and Will went home spent the evening with some of the members of the convention.

#### SATURDAY 13

Weather mild and pleasant. Convention met at 12 o Clock, left for home in the afternoon,

#### SUNDAY 14

Weather mild and fair spent the day at home, nothing of interest transpired,

#### MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1864.

Weather cloudy and raw in the morning, snowed in the afternoon, went to the court house it being court day.<sup>10</sup>

#### TUESDAY 16

Weather cloudy and cold in the morning with some snow cleared off at noon very cold and windy, went to Anna Wrights and Walter Waltons wedding.<sup>11</sup>

#### WEDNESDAY 17

Weather cold and windy. stayed in the house all day, read Dr. Marks book on the Peninsular campaign<sup>12</sup>, Home gaurds<sup>13</sup> (sic) elected Officers, in the evening

#### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1864.

Weather still continues cold and clear. Made a hen house for Mrs. Mason, read Farmingdale a novel by Caroline Thomas quite an interesting book.

FRIDAY 19

Weather clear and cold, nothing of interest occurred, read the last of the Foresters a novel by J Esten Cooke of Virginia<sup>14</sup>

SATURDAY 20

Weather Clear and more mild, went to Alexandria, bought some things for the Home Guards.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1864.

Weather mild and pleasant, took dinner at Uncle Samuels,

MONDAY 22

Weather cloudy but mild. Home Guards met in the evening, sowed my clover on the wheat land, issued a warrant against Daniel Williamson.<sup>15</sup>

TUESDAY 23

Weather very warm and pleasant, went to Mt Vernon for seed oats,

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1864.

Weather clear and pleasant went to Alexandria nothing worthy of note took place

THURSDAY 25

Weather still continues pleasant, attende (sic) a political meeting in the evening,

FRIDAY 26

Weather cold and windy, bought a lot of guano of Wilson & Co.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1864.

Weather mild and pleasant sowed clover seed in the morning, went to Accotink in the afternoon to try a case between Daniel Williamson & Jacob Troth<sup>16</sup>

SUNDAY 28

Weather pleasant but windy. A false alarm raised in regard to Guerrillas.

#### MONDAY 29

Weather cloudy and raw, went to Alexandria for guano, went on a scout in the night commenced to hail and rain, Paid 77.99 cts for guano.

#### TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 1864.

Weather stormy, rain and hail, caught two rebel soldiers, got home at noon very tired.

#### WEDNESDAY 2

Weather Pleasant and fair, nothing of interest occurred.

#### THURSDAY 3

Weather pleasant and mild, burnt brush in the afternoon,

#### FRIDAY MARCH 4, 1864.

Weather mild and pleasant, Joe Petitt commenced ploughing,

#### SATURDAY 5

Weather rainy, went to Washington to see about some guano.

#### SUNDAY 6

Weather raw and cold, stayed at home all day.

#### MONDAY, MARCH 7, 1864.

Weather fair and pleasant, Petitt went to ploughing in old Mill lot,<sup>17</sup> made a hot bed for tomatoes, sowed cabbage seed.

#### TUESDAY 8

Weather rainy, Petitt ploughed in the forenoon.

#### WEDNESDAY 9

Weather clear, sowed seed for Father in the morning, spread ashes on the wheat in the afternoon. issued a warrant to Wm Howard,

THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 1864.

Weather rainy, sowed oats in the morning, tried the case of Howard vs. Ferguson, bargained with Wm McAllister for a horse, Wm Holland commenced ploughing.

FRIDAY 11

Weather rainy, nothing of interest occurred, issued a warrant against Mrs. Rebecca Marders<sup>18</sup>

SATURDAY 12

Weather fair and pleasant, went to Alexandria, paid Wm McAllister for horse one hundred dollars.

SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 1864

Weather Fair and pleasant. nothing occurred worthy of note.

MONDAY 14

Weather Fair and windy, set out some fruit trees, Wm Holland and Pettitt Ploughed in old mill lot.

TUESDAY 15

Weathe (sic) fair, finished ploughing and sowing oats in old mill lot, commenced ploughing for corn in the field next to Lukens<sup>19</sup>

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 1864.

Weather very cold and windy. nothing worthy of note occurred.

THURSDAY 17

Weather fair and pleasant. finished sowing grass seed.

FRIDAY 18

Weather fair very windy,

SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 1864.

Weather fair and pleasant. finished ploughing corn land.

SUNDAY 20

Weather fair but raw and cold, went on a scout as far as Oeecoquan Colchester accomplished nothing.

MONDAY 21

Weather raw and cloudy, attended the county court, went to the Union league in the evening.

TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 1864.

Weather cloudy and cold, court still in session commenced to snow about five o'clock in the afternoon,

WEDNESDAY 23

Weather clear and cold, county court adjourned, rode home with Lukens.

THURSDAY 24

Weather clear and cold, snow still on the ground, visited John Troths<sup>20</sup> in the afternoon, heard of the capture of Hannegan.

FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 1864.

Weather Cloudy and rainy,

SATURDAY 26

Weather rainy,

SUNDAY 27

Weather fair and pleasant, nothing of interest occurred.

MONDAY, MARCH 28, 1864.

Weather fair and pleasant, got a lot of pear and cherry trees of Chalkly<sup>21</sup>.

TUESDAY 29

Weather cloudy and windy, commenced to rain in the evening.

WEDNESDAY 30

Weather cloudy and rainy

THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 1864.

Weather cloudy and windy, got about 200 apple and peach trees of Chalkley Gillingham. commenced to set them out in the afternoon.

FRIDAY, APRIL 1

Weather cloudy, rained in the afternoon.

SATURDAY 2

Weather very stormy, a regular Northeaster, Anna<sup>22</sup> got home from school,

SUNDAY, APRIL 3, 1864.

Weather cloudy, Read one of Shakespeares plays, Measure for Measure.

MONDAY 4

Weather cloudy in the morning, rained in the afternoon, finished setting out trees in the orchard.

TUESDAY 5

Weather stormy, a bitter cold Northeaster, one of the worst storms of the season

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 1864.

Weather rainy in the morning, cleared off in the forenoon, weighed a ton of hay for home use.

THURSDAY 7

Weather clear and pleasant, set out some trees for Mother.<sup>23</sup>

FRIDAY 8

Weather fair and pleasant, cut some white oaks for barn frame in the afternoon.

SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 1864.

Weather rainy, Mother and I went to Alexandria.

SUNDAY 10

Weather pleasant.

MONDAY 11

Weather cloudy and raw, went to Alexandria, attended the confiscation sales.

TUESDAY, APRIL 12, 1864.

Weather fair in the morning, cloudy in the afternoon, went to the theatre in the evening.

WEDNESDAY 13

Weather pleasant, went to west end held a preliminary hearing, in regard to holding a county convention.

THURSDAY 14

Weather cloudy, nothing of interest occurred,

FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 1864.

Weather fair and pleasant. Bill Hollang<sup>24</sup> ploughed on the hill

SATURDAY 16

Weather rainy went to Alexandria, bought 4 sacks of guano.

SUNDAY 17

Weather fair.

MONDAY, APRIL 18, 1864.

Weather pleasant, went on a scout at night, nothing accomplished.

TUESDAY 19

Weather fair, planted potatoes.

WEDNESDAY 20

Weather pleasant, had Hillman Troths<sup>25</sup> team in the afternoon to haul

logs

THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 1864.

Weather fair and pleasant planted potatoes in the forenoon, beets and beans in the afternoon,

FRIDAY 22

Weather fair, Mt Zephyrs barn burnt

SATURDAY 23

Weather quite warm and pleasant, went to Alexandria after Fanny<sup>26</sup> went out with the Cavalry in the night.

SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 1864.

Weather fair and pleasant, went on a scout two of the cavalry wounded, and two or three of the rebs got two horses.

MONDAY 25

Weather fair, planted peas and corn.

TUESDAY 26

Weather fair, planted parsnips onions and carrots

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 1864.

Weather fair. Harrowed the corn ground.

THURSDAY 28

Weather fair, finished harrowing corn ground commenced to mark it out, got 500 herring from Petitt.

FRIDAY 29

Weather fair, nothing of interest occurred,

SATURDAY, APRIL 30, 1864.

Weather fair commenced planting corn.

SUNDAY, MAY 1, 1864.

Weather fair and pleasant, went to Accotink with Uncle Larkin

MONDAY 2

Weather fair during the day a thunder storm at night, went to Alexandria, attended a nominating convention at west end.

TUESDAY, MAY 3, 1864.

Weather fair, went on a scout at night issued a warrant for the arrest of Robert Petitt.<sup>27</sup>

WEDNESDAY 4

Weather fair planted corn, issued a warrant for the arrest of ~~William~~ Abbott.

THURSDAY 5

Weather very warm finished planting corn, bound Petitt to appear at court heard Abbotts case put off till Monday

FRIDAY, MAY 6, 1864.

Weather warm, and pleasant, unloaded a load of manure, commenced to load Plaskets boat with wood.

SATURDAY 7

Weather warm and pleasant, finished loading wood boat, sold the calf,

SUNDAY 8

Weather very warm.

MONDAY, MAY 9, 1864.

Weather warm and sultry. went to Accotink in the afternoon, heard Abbotts case, bound him over to appear at court

TUESDAY 10

Weather fair, noth important took place.

### WEDNESDAY 11

Weather pleasant in the morning, shower in the afternoon. went to Alexandria.

### THURSDAY, MAY 12, 1864.

Weather cloudy with showers.

### FRIDAY 13

Weather rainy in the forenoon, cloudy in the afternoon, unloaded a boat load of manure.

### SATURDAY 14

Weather pleasant loaded a boat with wood,

### SUNDAY, MAY 15, 1864.

Weather Showery all day.

### MONDAY 16

Weather fair went to Alexandria, attended court.<sup>28</sup>

### TUESDAY 17

Weather Cloudy, nothing of interest occurred.

### WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 1864.

Weather fair, went to Georgetown in the afternoon, Wm had left for the front.

### THURSDAY 19

Weather fair returned home

### FRIDAY 20

Weather fair, replanted corn.

### SATURDAY, MAY 21, 1864.

Weather fair, finished replanting corn.

SUNDAY 22

Weather Pleasant in the morning, rained in the afternoon

MONDAY 23

Weather fair.

TUESDAY, MAY 24, 1864.

Weather fair.

WEDNESDAY 25

Weather fair, went to Mt. Zephyr sale, Charley ploughed ground for potatoes.

THURSDAY 26

Weather rainy in the forenoon, fair in the afternoon, Election day

FRIDAY, MAY 27, 1864.

Weather drizzly in the morning, cleared off pleasant, to work on fence,

SATURDAY 28

Weather pleasant all day, went to a picnic at Accotink in the afternoon.

SUNDAY 29

Weather very pleasant

MONDAY, MAY 30, 1864.

Weather fair planted some late potatoes.

TUESDAY 31

Weather pleasant.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1

Weather very warm

THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 1864.

Weather fair and pleasant,

### FRIDAY 3

Weather cool and pleasant. Petitts, Holland & Gibson ploughed in the meadow,

### SATURDAY 4

Weather fair, visited the Hospitals

### SUNDAY, JUNE 5, 1864.

Weather fair.

### MONDAY 6

Weather very warm, gust in the afternoon. McAllister's horse stolen went on a scout ~~in the~~ nothing accomplished.

### TUESDAY 7

Weather pleasant fixed sweet potatoes ground

### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 1864.

Weather fair

### THURSDAY 9

Weather pleasant

### FRIDAY 10

Weather pleasant

### SATURDAY, JUNE 11, 1864.

Weather cool and fair, went to Alexandria.

[skipped Sun 12 through Fri 17]

### SATURDAY 18

Weather fair and pleasant. Nothing of interest has occurred during the week, it has been very hot and dry, home guard met and chose officers

[skipped Sun 19]

MONDAY, JUNE 20, 1864.

Weather hot and dry, attended levy court<sup>29</sup>

TUESDAY 21

Weather hot and dry, issued a warrant against Fowler; tried the case in the afternoon.

WEDNESDAY 22

Weather hot & dry summoned as a witness on behalf of Amanda Mero.<sup>30</sup>

[skipped Th 23 and Fri 24]

SATURDAY 25

Weather very hot and dry; went to Alexandria

SUNDAY, JUNE 26, 1864.

Weather very hot and sultry

[skipped Mon 27]

TUESDAY 28

Weather cool and pleasant, commenced to cut my wheat

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 1864.

Weather warm finished my wheat

[skipped Thurs 30 – Fri Jul 1]

SATURDAY, JULY 2, 1864.

Weather hot, went to Alexandria. Dr. Bigelow & Wife came home with me.

SUNDAY 3

Weather pleasant had meeting in the afternoon

MONDAY 4

Weather cool and pleasant, visited the seminary and Slough Hospitals.<sup>31</sup>

[skipped Tues 5]

WEDNESDAY 6

Weather dry and hot. Visited the slough Hospital, Guerrillas made a raid into Chalkley's, stole 4 horses which were afterward recaptured.<sup>32</sup>

[skipped Thurs 7]

FRIDAY, JULY 8, 1864.

Weather dry, commenced cutting oats.

SATURDAY 9

Weather dry and hot finished cutting oats

[skipped Sun 10 – Tues 12]

WEDNESDAY 13

Weather pleasant, went to Washington, great excitement on acct of rebel invasion of Maryland.<sup>33</sup>

[skipped Thurs 14]

FRIDAY 15

Weather fair and pleasant. rebel raid in the neighborhood they got 2 horses from Lewis Quanders<sup>34</sup> one colored man shot. two rebels shot.<sup>35</sup>

[skipped Sat 16-Mon 18]

TUESDAY 19

Weather hot and dry went to Alexandria.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 1864.

Weather dry and pleasant, neighborhood visited the hospitals, went to Georgetown of [word missing] William's things

[skipped Thurs 21 – Mon 25]

TUESDAY, JULY 26, 1864.

Weather pleasant, went to market.

WEDNESDAY 27

Weather still dry and hot, went to Washington as a witness in the case of John Linton.

[skipped Thurs 28]

FRIDAY, JULY 29, 1864.

Weather still hot and dry, went to Washington on the Linton trial, staid all night with Uncle Larkin.

SATURDAY 30

Weather very hot Uncle Larkin came home with me. rebel raid on the Broders neighborhood.<sup>36</sup>

[Skipped Sun 31 – Mon 1 Aug]

TUESDAY 2

Weather hot and dry in the morning a slight shower in the evening, commenced threshing.

WEDNESDAY 3

Weather fair and pleasant, got through with the machine.

[skipped Thurs 4]

FRIDAY 5

Weather fair and pleasant, sowed some buckwheat and rye.

[skipped Sat 6 – Fri 19]

## SATURDAY 20

Weather Cloudy and damp, went to Alexandria, home guard elected Officers in the evening.

[skipped Sun 21]

## MONDAY, AUGUST 22, 1864.

Weather Cloudy & drizzly commenced to dig the cellar for a house and hauled stone

[skipped Tues 23 -----]

From this point forward, Mason uses the diary as a type of account book. He blacked out several of the dates. There are several math equations and calculations. Note: the hatch marks accompanying each entry never seem to have any relation to any number in the calculations. For example, in one entry he has 18 hatch marks, but there is no 18 in any of the nearby equations. This is the norm for these entries.

## THURSDAY AUGUST 25, 1864

The page has a few math equations then: Freight of load of wood 29  $\frac{7}{8}$  cords wood at \$2.00 a cord \$59.75. Two freights of 2 loads manure \$70.00.

The other side of the page is somewhat illegible: 20 ....wood, ...\$100.00. 8  $\frac{3}{8}$  oak wood 58.62 . ..... cords oak 10.50(?), wood of ... both \$12.50, \$169.12

## Wednesday August 31 (date crossed out)

Extracts from Tupper. The pen, flowing with love, or dipped black in hate, or tipped with delicate courtesies, or harshly edged with censure, Hath quickened more good than the sun, more evil than the sword, More joy than woman's smile, more woe than frowning fortune.

Facing page: Humphreys acct wood. 18 hatch marks, a math equation

(w/o the #18). Jordans wood acct. 24 hatch marks, more math equations.

Tuesday Sep 6

Frank Whiting acct wood. 18 hatch marks,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  cords, more math

Jim Quander wood acct. 25 hatch marks,  $6\frac{1}{4}$  cords, math.

George Troth wood acct. 15 hatch marks, math.

Facing page: a pattern of hatch marks, not with the usual cross hatch to indicate a group of 5. This alternates beginning with four groups of six on the first line, alternating with four groups of three, centered below the above group. The pattern continues for six lines total, ending with the four groups of three. More math...

Monday Sept 12

George Server [Scriven? Illegible] wood acct, 11 cords, rails

Lew Walton [?] wood acct, 6 cords

Jim Branson [?] wood acct, 2 cords,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  cords 3[?] rails

Facing page:

Jack Quanders wood acct

John Green wood acct, 95 rails

Sam Davis wood acct,  $3\frac{7}{8}$  cords wood, 204 rails

Sunday Sept 18

Humphrey Davis acct, 122 rails,  $7\frac{5}{8}$  cords, 160 rails, 160 posts

Charles Brawners acct, 58 rails

George Bateman acct, 162 rails, 142 rails on Brawners acct

Facing page:

Jim Quander Apl 25 1866,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cords of wood

John Green Apl 25 186[6?],  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cords, 72 rails

Humphrey Davis Apl [smear...]

Saturday Sept 24

Charles Jordan, Apl 25 1866, 9 hatchmarks for oak, 11 for pine. 5 cords.

George Scriv...., Apl 25<sup>th</sup> 1866,  $9\frac{1}{4}$  cords

Frank Whiting, Apl 21 1866

Facing page:

Equations at top.

Jesse Jordans wood acct 51 [57?] rails

Friday, Sept 30

He has a long column:

Humphrey	13 6/8 cords
C. Jordan	11 “
Whiting	5 9/8 “
Jim Quander	8 “
Geo Ford?Hord?	3 6/8 “
Scriver	20 2/8 “
Wallace	6 “
Branson	8 9/8 “
Jack Quander	3 “
Green	10 4/8 “
Davis	3 7/8 “
Brawner	8 “
Jas Jordan	<u>7</u> “

109 1/8 cords

More equations. Final product seems to be 81.84

NO ENTRIES THROUGH NOV 22.

Wednesday, Nov 23

S.W. Mason, Dr

To 8 bu wheat \$22.40

Cr by cash \$1000

Shoeing horse .75

Dec 9<sup>th</sup> by hinges & staples 1.30

Dec 12<sup>th</sup> by shoeing horse .87

Jan 5<sup>th</sup> by 2 oxen links

“ nail & staple

" work on harness & traces .60  
 Feb 4<sup>th</sup> " shoeing horse 2.00  
 " ironing swing traces 2.50  
 " handle in shovel .25  
 Apl 8<sup>th</sup> " new breastchain  
 " two rings & staples in harness  
 May 4 removes  
 May 2 removes

Tuesday, Nov 29  
 Gibson rail acct, 88 posts \$1.76, rails...

Monday, Dec 5  
 Weight of hay 4797 lbs, straw 3500 lbs  
 1865,  
 S.W. Mason Cr by book – Acct \$25.59.  
 S.W. Mason Cr by lot of hinges & staples.

Sunday, Dec 11  
 S.W. Mason Cr by two shoes on Fanny .87 [may be or]  
 Jan 5<sup>th</sup> 1865 2 open links  
 " "

rail & staple  
 2  
 2

Friday, Dec 23  
 Amt of wood cut  

George Bateman	17 cords	\$15.50
Ignatius King	17 cords	24.57
Humphrey Davis	<u>13 1/4 cords</u>	<u>19.87</u>
	47 1/4	59.94

S.W. Mason Cr by work on harness and traces  
 60  
12.92

13.52

Feb 4<sup>th</sup> 1865

S.W. Mason Cr by

shoeing a horse 2.00

Ironing swing traces 2.50

4.50

handle in a shovel .25

The calendar year ends Saturday 31, on a left hand page. To the right is a "Memoranda" page, upon which Mason has written:

Of expenses on acct of barn [illegible- may read April 8th]

2 men cutting logs for frame..... \$1.00

April 20<sup>th</sup> Hillmans team for ½ a day.....2.00

Jordan ¼ of day..... .25

Hilman (sic) Troth for boards ..... 7.5

Aug 27<sup>th</sup> digging cellar 13.00

Sept 3d doors and sash 18.00

" 6 bbls lime 10.50

" " oak plank 1.00

10<sup>th</sup> " .25

" window frames 9.00

" hauling stone & walling cellar 13.25

24<sup>th</sup> weather boards & other lumber 28.00

" shingles 12.00

" nails 6.00

121.75

page 2 of memoranda:

expenses for building brought forward 121.75

Oct 1<sup>st</sup> lumber 22.50

" window & door frame 14.10

" lumber of Abbott 11.00

" 8<sup>th</sup> lumber 16.75

" " shingles 12.00

" "	window frames	4.00
" "	nails	1.20
" 15 <sup>th</sup>	15 lbs nails	1.80
" "	shingles	3.00
" 17 <sup>th</sup>	flooring	23.75
" "	nails	1.20
" 22 <sup>nd</sup>	window sash	8.50
" "	plank	1.75
" "	nails	1.20
" 27 <sup>th</sup>	lumber	18.38
"	1 bbl lime	2.50
" 31 <sup>st</sup>	lock	1.75
Nov 19 <sup>th</sup>	" & hinges	.75
"	nails	.50
Dec 3d	"	2.94
" 10 <sup>th</sup>	hinges & staples	<u>2.30</u>
		272.62

page 3 of memoranda:

brought forward	272.62
Dec 10 <sup>th</sup> shingles	12.00
“ lumber of Abbott	11.00
“ 14 <sup>th</sup> 5 lb nails	.60
“ 21 <sup>st</sup> carpenters bill	<u>120.00</u>
	416.22

page 5 of memoranda [page 4 was blank]:

May 12 <sup>th</sup>	received for load of wood	97.31
June 4 <sup>th</sup>	received for load of wood	101.00
Oct 18 <sup>th</sup>	received for load of wood	151.62

page 6 of memoranda:

16<sup>th</sup> day of April got two flour bbls of corn from Will

April 20<sup>th</sup> 1 bbl of corn for seed.  
 May 7<sup>th</sup> two bbls corn  
 Jun 2d two “ “  
 “ 25<sup>th</sup> “ “ “  
 July 12<sup>th</sup> two “ “  
 “ 26<sup>th</sup> “ “ “  
 Aug 27<sup>th</sup> “ “ “  
     whole amt 15 bbls  
 Oct 29<sup>th</sup> Paid Will back 4 bbls corn  
 Nov 3d 4 “ “  
 “ 12<sup>th</sup> 6 “ “

page 7 of memoranda:

8<sup>th</sup> day of April Stephen commenced work at 4 dollars a month

May 6<sup>th</sup> 1 ½ days lost 25  
 “ “ tobacco .10  
 “ 11<sup>th</sup> lost 1 day .20  
 “ 12<sup>th</sup> Stephen left

Below the line the following text has a line from bottom left to upper right crossing it out:

June 4<sup>th</sup> Jim Orz by 5 days work 2.50  
 June 11<sup>th</sup> Jim Cr by 15 days 2.50  
 June 11<sup>th</sup> Dr. to cash for sycthe [sic] sinath(?) and plough point 1.50  
 18<sup>th</sup> Jim cash in full 365.

The following pages are entitled “Cash Account” and have columns for date, received, and paid.

# CASH ACCOUNT. JANUARY

Date		Received	Paid
Jan 4 <sup>th</sup>	Pair of gum shoes		1.50
“	over coat		17.00

"	Pair gloves	.75
"	For Diary	.40
9 <sup>th</sup>	expenses for the week	1.90
16 <sup>th</sup>	" " "	1.75
23 <sup>d</sup>	" " "	1.70
25 <sup>th</sup>	Pair of boots	6.00
28 <sup>th</sup>	mending "	2.50
30 <sup>th</sup>	expenses of the week	4.65
31 <sup>st</sup>	missionary	7.00
Feb 3 <sup>d</sup>	paid for board	20.00
" 6 <sup>th</sup>	expenses of the week	2.45
" "	received cash	196.00
" 9 <sup>th</sup>	for Board	7.00
" "	expenses week	7.70
" 29 <sup>th</sup>	" "	.60
" 27 <sup>th</sup>	" "	<u>1.90</u>
		84.80

facing page:

March 8 <sup>th</sup>	weighed 134 lbs oats
" 10 <sup>th</sup>	" 90 " "
" 15 <sup>th</sup>	" 2.70

Some miscellaneous math equations on this page.

CASH ACCOUNT. FEBRUARY [this is crossed out, as are date, rec'd, paid]

Date	Received	Paid
March 9 <sup>th</sup> weighed 141 lbs guano for Father		

Expenses of Old mill lot

16 <sup>th</sup> March	seed oats	15.50
"	grass seed	10.00
"	guano	56.00
"	ploughing	<u>19.50</u>
		111.00

The information above has a black line drawn through it. Below does not:

April 20 <sup>th</sup>	expenses of the knoll lot, ploughing	7.50
	potatoes for seed	5.50
	guano	12.50

Facing page:

Expenses of corn field

March 9<sup>th</sup>

	Ploughing	18.00
April 28 <sup>th</sup>	harrowing	1.50
May 21 <sup>st</sup>	Charly Ball [Bell?]	.40

# CASH ACCOUNT. MARCH.

Date		Received	Paid
1864			
4 <sup>th</sup>	Denike for threshing		4.50
5 <sup>th</sup>	shovel		1.25
"	plough points		.90
"	cabbage seed		.30
11 <sup>th</sup>	mother for corn		3.00
"	received cash	.90	
12 <sup>th</sup>	potatoes		3.06
"	collar & bridle		5.25
"	papers &c		.30
15 <sup>th</sup>	paid Ned mdg boot		.25
"	received on gold	138.60	
"	Pd for guano		78.00
16 <sup>th</sup>	" Ned for harrowing		2.25
"	" blacksmith		.25
17 <sup>th</sup>	" for 15 ½ bu oats		15.50
18 <sup>th</sup>	" Old Joe		.50
19 <sup>th</sup>	" Petitt		20.00
"	" Holland		10.00

23d	expenses attending court	<u>1.97</u>
	\$139.50	147.22
Facing page:		
1864		
24 <sup>th</sup>	Pd Ned for mdg boot	.25
26 <sup>th</sup>	" " "	.25
30 <sup>th</sup>	send for cabbage seed	1.00
"	Pd Mero for axe handle	<u>.25</u>
		1.75
	amt brt forward	<u>147.22</u>
		148.97

# CASH ACCOUNT. APRIL.

Date		Received	Paid
6 <sup>th</sup>	To William Holland		2.25
9 <sup>th</sup>	" Mrs. Gillingham		1.50
"	" paper & lunch		.20
"	by amt red on [illegible]	19.50	
11 <sup>th</sup>	<del>paid for corn, peat</del>		<del>2.50</del>
12 <sup>th</sup>	<del>for box and seed</del>		<del>.50</del>
"	Mr. Harper for net		5.00
"	for sundries		1.25
"	" revenue stamp		.50
16 <sup>th</sup>	" box garden seed		.50
"	" guano		22.86
20 <sup>th</sup>	" blacksmith		.80
21 <sup>st</sup>	recd cash	.35	
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Pd for plough		4.75
"	" fork & nails		
1.40			
"	" plough point		.25
"	seed peas &c		1.59
25 <sup>th</sup>	shoeing horse		<u>.25</u>
		1.85	43.10

Facing page is blank.

# CASH ACCOUNT. MAY.

Date	Received	Paid
May 2d cash on silian [?]	11.00	
“ “ Pd for sycthe (sic)		1.30
“ “ “ hoe		.70
“ 12 <sup>th</sup> for mule		2.00
“ “ seed potatoes		2.50
“ “ hay		5.00
“ “ plaster		2.00
“ “ sundries		.40
“ 12 <sup>th</sup> boat load of wood	97.31	
“ “ “ “ of manure		45.00
“ “ Holland for ploughing		3.50
“ 19 <sup>th</sup> Paid for [illegible] plough		7.00
“ “ “ “ axle		3.00
“ “ “ mending swgh tree		.40
“ “ “ cartridges		.20
“ “ “ for shoes		3.00
“ “ “ wages		.90
“ 25 <sup>th</sup> cradle, nails		5.80
“ “ hoes, rifle		1.90
“ 28 <sup>th</sup> Charley Bell		<u>.60</u>
	1.31	85.20

Facing page:

28 <sup>th</sup> Petitt bag guano		5.25
Brt forward		<u>85.20</u>
Brt forward	108.31	90.45

# CASH ACCOUNT. JUNE.

Date	Received	Paid
2 <sup>nd</sup> paid wages		1.00
4 <sup>th</sup> “ Mrs. Gillingham		2.00
“ “ papers		.15

"	recd for load of wood	101.00	
"	pd for load manure		45.00
6 <sup>th</sup>	" Wm. Holland		4.00
7 <sup>th</sup>	" J. Petitt		4.00
11 <sup>th</sup>	" for harness		15.00
11	" Ned cash		2.00
"	" Jim Quander		1.35
18 <sup>th</sup>	" " "		3.65
"	" Joe Harrison		2.00
"	" mending wagon		5.25
"	" seed buckwheat		4.50
25 <sup>th</sup>	" cash to Ned		3.00
28 <sup>th</sup>	" Joe Harrison		.60
"	Personal expenses		1.00
29 <sup>th</sup>	pd for raking wheat		<u>2.00</u>
		101.0	96.50

Facing page blank.

#### CASH ACCOUNT. JULY.

Date		Received	Paid
2d	pd Mondly		2.00
"	" Humphrey		.75
4 <sup>th</sup>	" Chalkley		20.00
"	" personal expenses		.50
"	[illegible] receipts	3.00	
9 <sup>th</sup>	John Holland		2.25
"	Jim Browner		1.00
"	personal expenses		1.10
"	George Bateman		3.00
14 <sup>th</sup>	Mondley		4.00
"	Celia		1.00
"	Jim Orz		2.50
"	G. Robinson		1.00
"	P.H. Troth		7.50
"	personal expenses		.85

21 <sup>st</sup>	for harvesting		4.60
"	blacksmith		1.20
"	ho[r]sefeed		.50
"	Personal expenses		2.00
"	received cash	.50	
		1.50	55.75

Facing page:

22d	for potatoes	3.00	
26 <sup>th</sup>	" "	4.40	
"	" guano & plaster		24.55
"	" turnip seed		2.00
"	" George Robinson		1.00
"	" Ned		2.50
"	" Joe Carter		1.50
27 <sup>th</sup>	" Expenses to Washington		1.10
30 <sup>th</sup>	" " "		.65
		1.40	33.35
		1.50	55.75
		1.90	89.10

# CASH ACCOUNT. AUGUST.

Date		Received	Paid
5 <sup>th</sup>	for 1 bu oats	1.00	
"	pd blacksmith		.95
12 <sup>th</sup>	" for plough point		.80
"	" personal expenses		.25
"	recd for potatoes	8.00	
"	" " tomatoes	1.00	
"	" 1 bu oats	1.00	
"	" wages		13.85
13 <sup>th</sup>	"		3.00
[crossed out]			
20 <sup>th</sup>	"		22.50
"	for cart Harness		10.00
"	" fruit trees		10.30

"	" potatoes	6.00	
"	" tomatoes	.50	
"	expenses at court		1.00
	pd for knife		1.00
"	3 ½ bu oats	2.50	
"	for warrant	.50	
27 <sup>th</sup>	wages		9.25
"	expenses		<u>2.00</u>
		1.50	71.40

Facing page:

27 <sup>th</sup>	3 bu oats	3.00	
"	tomatoes	1.00	
"	flour	1.00	
"	feed		2.00
"	"		<u>1.00</u>
		\$26.50	74.40

# CASH ACCOUNT. SEPTEMBER.

Date		Received	Paid
3d	wages		15.60
"	blacksmith		.65
"	feed		1.00
"	Tomatoes	.65	
10 <sup>th</sup>	wages		16.10
"	3 bu oats	3.00	
"	Tomatoes	.75	
"	feed		1.00
17 <sup>th</sup>	Tomatoes	.50	
"	3 ½ bu oats	3.50	
"	wages		10.00
"	expenses to Washington		.70
24 <sup>th</sup>	plough point		.75
"	feed		2.00
"	nails		5.40
"	boots		11.00

“	grass seed		4.00
“	lumber & shingles		40.00
“	for warrant	.50	
“	wages		18.36
		1.90	86.56

Facing page:

24	8 bu oats	8.00	
“	Tomatoes	.50	
“	nails		.60
30 <sup>th</sup>	flour	4.00	
“	6 bu oats	6.00	
“	wages		12.55
“	lumber & frames		36.60
“	blacksmith		1.25
		8.90	86.56
		1.90	137.56

# CASH ACCOUNT. OCTOBER.

Date		Received	Paid
8 <sup>th</sup>	wages		18.42
“	lumber & nails		33.95
“	expenses to Washington		1.20
“	cabbages & potatoes	1.75	
“	boat load of wood	151.62	
“	wages		5.50
“	peck of meal	.53	
“	for cow		8.00
14 <sup>th</sup>	blacksmith		1.00
“	plank &c box		.35
“	for 4 bu oats	4.00	
“	for 5 lb nails		1.80
15 <sup>th</sup>	wages		16.28
“	cabbages & potatoes	5.00	
“	sweet potatoes	.75	
“	shingles		3.00

17 <sup>th</sup>	flooring		23.75
"	nails		1.20
"	oats		.45
"	personal		.35
		1.65	115.24

Facing page:

22d	for plank		1.75
"	for feed		1.80
24 <sup>th</sup>	" nails		1.20
"	window sash		8.50
"	wages		10.00
27 <sup>th</sup>	1 bbl lime		2.50
"	lumber		18.35
31 <sup>st</sup>	lock		1.75
"	personal expense		.35
"	flour	1.25	
"	2 bu oats	2.00	
		169.65	115.24
		1.90	161.47
for long boat			300.00
		1.90	461.47

# CASH ACCOUNT. NOVEMBER.

Date		Received	Paid
5 <sup>th</sup>	cash for wheat		19.40
"	2 bu swt potatoes	2.00	
"	wages		5.88
"	"		.25
"	stamp		2.50
"	flour	2.40	
"	potatoes	.20	
12 <sup>th</sup>	wages		7.35
"	recd on warrant	.50	
19 <sup>th</sup>	" for buckwheat	8.40	
"	" 2 bu potatoes	14.00	

"	" cabbage	1.00	
"	pd for nails		.50
"	wages		12.37
"	lock & hinges		.75
21 <sup>st</sup>	pork & flour	2.60	
"	shingles		12.00
"	nails		.84
"	personal		.25
22	8 bu wheat	<u>22.40</u>	
		1.50	56.69

Facing page:

	Brt forward	43.50	56.69
26 <sup>th</sup>	wages		7.00
"	nails		1.20
"	personal exp.		.30
"	for buckwheat flour	8.50	
Nov 29 <sup>th</sup>	nails		1.80
"	" "		.30
"	" wages		14.69
"	" rope		.90
"	" lantern		.45
"	" of Peter Harvy Harry?	25.00	
"	" services at court	-	
<u>25.00</u>		<u>102.0</u>	83.33

#### CASH ACCOUNT. DECEMBER.

Date		Received	Paid
5 <sup>th</sup>	wages		5.00
10 <sup>th</sup>	wages		6.30
"	personal [illegible]	17.00	
"	" exps		4.00
"	for port(?) & [illegible]		7.35
"	hinges & staples		2.30
12 <sup>th</sup>	wages		10.00

"	1 bu of rye		2.00
14 <sup>th</sup>	5 lb nails		.60
"	expenses to Washington		.75
21 <sup>st</sup>	flour	3.00	
"	hooping bbl		.50
"	1 bu potatoes	2.00	
21 <sup>st</sup>	wages		10.00
"	"		5.00
22 <sup>d</sup>	income of boat	20.00	
26 <sup>th</sup>	" " "	4.30	
"	wages		5.00
"	21 lbs flour	1.47	
"	for boat load of wood	115.50	

Facing page:

26 <sup>th</sup>	Paid for manure	115.50
27 <sup>th</sup>	" wages	2.00

Jan 5<sup>th</sup> 1865

	Cash for flour	3.00
" 10 <sup>th</sup>	" for cow	65.00

# SUMMARY OF CASH ACCOUNT.

		Received	Paid
JAN	For Sundries		45.15
FEB	" "	196.00	39.65
MAR	" "	139.50	148.97
APR	" "	19.85	43.10
MAY	" "	108.31	85.20
JUNE	" "	101.96	96.50
JULY		10.90	89.10
AUG		26.50	74.40
SEPT		27.40	1512.56
[smeared]			
OCT		166.90	861.47

NOV

102.00

83.33

Facing page:

## MEMORANDA

Date	Dolls.	Cts.
Jan 1 <sup>st</sup> Paid Ned cash	10	00
“ 18 <sup>th</sup> “ “ “	2	75
Feb 15 <sup>th</sup> clover seed	10	50
“ 29 <sup>th</sup> grass seed	10	00
Apl 16 <sup>th</sup> Ned cash	3	00
“ 17 <sup>th</sup> “ “		80

More pages of memoranda follow:

## MEMORANDA [this page has a line drawn through it]

Date	Dolls.	Cts.
Apl 16 <sup>th</sup> Paid for 23 ¼ lbs		
bacon for Jordan	3	25
“ “ for 1 bushel of corn meal		
for Dawson	1	40
“ 18 <sup>th</sup> Paid “ cash	8	44
“ “ Jordan “		
and Tobacco	5	25
“ 28 <sup>th</sup> Dawson cash 2	80	
“ “ Jordan cash	1	50
May 2 “ “	5	00
“ “ “ meal	3	00
“ “ “ bacon	1	88

Facing page:

## MEMORANDA

of Wood acct

Date	Dolls.	Cts.
Apl 16 <sup>th</sup> for cutting 28 ¾ cds	21	56
“ 18 <sup>th</sup> “ “ 12 ¼ “	9	19

"	28 <sup>th</sup>	"	"	3 3/4	"2	80	
"	28 <sup>th</sup>	"	"	25 7/8	"	18	96
May	12 <sup>th</sup>	"	"	4 1/2	"	<u>3</u>	<u>25</u>
						\$55.96	

# MEMORANDA

Date		Dolls.	Cts.
May 6 <sup>th</sup>	Cash due Ned	5	00
"	" 1 1/2 days horse	1	50
"	8 <sup>th</sup> 2 days horse and cart	4	00
"	14 <sup>th</sup> 1 1/2 " " "	3	<u>75</u>
	and boy	14	25
		<u>8</u>	<u>30</u>
		\$	5.95

22d Due Ned

May 22d	cash Due Ned	5	95
June 25 <sup>th</sup>	Cr by 2 days ploughing	2	00
29 <sup>th</sup>	cradling 1/2 day	1	00
July 9 <sup>th</sup>	stacking 2 days	4	00
"	horse 1/2 day		<u>50</u>
		13.	45
		<u>10.</u>	<u>80</u>
Aug 2d	pd cash	2.	60

Facing page:

# MEMORANDA

Date		Dolls.	Cts.
May 6 <sup>th</sup>	Ned Dr to		
	land side for Plough	1	10
	Tobacco		35
"	8 <sup>th</sup> shoulder bacon	1	95
"	10 <sup>th</sup> paid cash	<u>5</u>	<u>00</u>
		<u>8</u>	<u>30</u>
June 11 <sup>th</sup>	Pd Ned cash	2	00

" 2d " " "	3	00
" 21 <sup>st</sup> Due[?] to 1½ days work with Fanny	1	50
" expense on axle tree	<u>1</u>	<u>50</u>
	8	00
July 26 <sup>th</sup> shoulder bacon	2	50
" 29 <sup>th</sup> potatoes, Tobacco		<u>35</u>
	10	85
Aug 2d pd cash	<u>2</u>	<u>60</u>
	13	45

---

Aug 3d due Ned	2	75
" 10 <sup>th</sup> Ned Cr by 1 ½ days ploughing	6	00

#### MEMORANDA

Date	Dolls.	Cts.
May 7 <sup>th</sup> boat load of manure	45	00
" 15 <sup>th</sup> boat load of manure	45	00

#### Facing page:

Aug 4 <sup>th</sup> Ned Gibson(?) Due to 1 bu oats	1.00
Aug 8 <sup>th</sup> 1 bu oats	1.00
" 20 <sup>th</sup> cash	5.00
" " shoulder bacon	2.00

[The following page is stained, and Mason wrote in pencil, so it is difficult to read:]

Talleyrand's definition of speech.

A faculty whereby we conceal our thoughts.

#### Facing page:

Col Thos H. Kellam  
Pungoteague  
Accomac Co

## Virginia

Expenses for week	2.85
Feb 9 <sup>th</sup> board	7.00

sweet potatoes	
from Lain's	.60 cts.
“ Stiles	1.60
“ “	<u>1.75</u>
	3.95

Ned Denike Cr By threshing	71[?]
bu wheat	
threshing 169 bu oats	

Inserted in a compartment of the diary is a calling card:

Edward F. Porter,  
Office, 22 Custom House Street,  
BOSTON.  
House, 16 Paris Street, East Boston

On the reverse of the card Mason made some math calculations in pencil.

Another piece of paper was folded. The exterior reads:

EE Mason

The interior reads:

Vernondale 6 mo 1864

E.E. Mason

To C. Gillingham &c

1864

3 mo 28 <sup>th</sup> To	110 apple trees	12 dols	13.20
	100 peach do	8	8.00
	11 pear do	45	4.95

	10 cherry “	40	4.00
	2 grape vines	40	<u>80</u>
			\$39.95
7 mo 3	By Cash		<u>20.00</u>
			10.95
	5 trees deducted 60 cts		<u>44</u>
			10.51

Recd payment in full Lewis Gillingham

A sheet of paper unfolded reads:

Woodlawn March 11<sup>th</sup> 1864

On demand I promise to pay William McAllister  
for value received (one brown mare) one hundred dollars. E.E.

Mason

Received payment William McAllister

The reverse of the sheet has the equation:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 6.78 \\
 40 \\
 65 \\
 \hline
 400 \\
 \hline
 11.83
 \end{array}$$

A newspaper clipping:

Resolutions. At a meeting of the Accotink Home Guards, held in Fairfax Co., May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1865, the following preamble and resolution were adopted:

Whereas. Many rebel soldiers and civilians who, in the spring of 1861, by their threats and acts of violence, caused many loyal citizens of this vicinity to abandon their homes and property; and whereas these same men, after having failed in their infamous designs of overthrowing the Federal Government and appropriating the property of loyal men, are now returning to our neighborhood, and in consideration of our past experience, as well as to protect our future well being, we deem the presence of these men detrimental to the interests of this community.

We, therefore,

*Resolve*, That while we do not object to the return of some of those who evince by their acts a desire to become loyal to the Federal Government, we do most solemnly declare we will not tolerate the presence of certain persons, who have rendered themselves obnoxious by their past conduct.

There is one more newspaper clipping. One side has two legal notices and an advertisement for sewing machines. The other is an editorial column. The date of the paper is January 11, 1865. The name of the paper is cut off.

*The editorial:*

### **The Accotink Meeting**

Editor State Journal: - I find in your issue of Monday two articles relative to the recent action of the citizens of Accotink toward the Restored Government of Virginia.

In your issue of Friday last, in an article purporting to be the proceedings of a public meeting held at Woodlawn, it appear that "*Mr. John Mason read a memorial setting forth the inefficiency of the present State Government,*" and which was referred to a committee which subsequently reported the memorial published in your issue of that day.

What change has come over the spirit of their dreams? Or, what strange mutations have occurred in the course of the past year that could induce the Solons of Accotink and Woodlawn to now attempt to destroy that which they so recently assisted in erecting?

The memorial reported by the committee declares "*that a memorial emanating from those constituting the present State Government of Virginia at Alexandria, and those directly interested therein; is not a true representation of the most loyal sentiment in Virginia, and we solemnly protest against its being so received.*" I presume we are to understand from this that the persons constituting the meeting held at Woodlawn, do represent the "*most loyal sentiment of Virginia.*" One of the committee appointed to carry out the views of the meeting, was a prominent aspirant for Legislative honors under this self-same "*inefficient*

*Government.*" We are led to suppose that, had he been elected, this government would have been "all right on the goose," or, in other words, would have "*represented the most loyal sentiment of Virginia.*" "What a fall was there, my countrymen." We have now to deplore the stiff-necked obstinacy of the people of Fairfax, through which the House of Delegates lost this paragon of learning, and accomplished statesman, who would have been another bright star in the galaxy of Virginia's notables.

Another member of that committee was a member of the Wheeling Convention, which organized the present State Government, (I will say nothing about how he was "*elected*" to that position) and was Sergeant-at-Arms of the Senate last winter. It will be readily understood that, had he still held the same position at the present session, his name would not have appeared in that committee. The gentleman is a Magistrate of the county, and if I mistake not has some "*respect and obedience*" shown him when acting officially.

Another member of said committee has made himself famous by the "campaigns" he planned for the military authorities of the United States Government, in the prosecution of the present war, and the numerous suggestions he has made for the military organization of this part of the State; and likewise that master stroke of policy in having "*an anchor to windward,*" which consisted in an invitation (he had inserted in the *Fairfax County News*, a journal published at Fairfax Court House at the outbreak of the rebellion) to the rebel Commandant of this District to make a Camp of Instruction on his farm.

The memorialists, in conclusion, desire Congress to form a Territorial Government for us. How would that help the matter? The same civil organization is necessary in that event, that we now have. There will be the same expenditures, the same taxes, the same causes of complaint which they now have. Uncle Sam cannot afford to do these things for nothing – he must be well paid for all he does. Several members of this committee, as we as a respectable number of the citizens of Fairfax, have had their taxes remitted by this inefficient Government, and several of that committee admitted that they had made more money during the time for which the tax was remitted than before the war. Possibly they may desire to have some troops encamped in

their vicinity in order that they may have an opportunity of acquiring a few more greenbacks, by selling to the soldiers. And probably there hangs the "Tale."

## FAIR PLAY

Reverse side:

### LEGAL NOTICES

#### **VIRGINIA:**

At Rules held in the Clerk's Office of the County Court of Fairfax County, on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of November, 1864; Nelson Voorhees, plaintiff, against Henderson Pool, defendant. In an action of trespass de bonis apostates.

The object of this suit is to recover of said defendant five hundred dollars. Said defendant not having entered his appearance according to law; and it appearing by affidavit filed that process against said defendant has been twice directed to the Sheriff of said Fairfax county in which said defendant resides, and delivered to said officer more than ten days before the return day thereof, and returned without being executed

*It is ordered*, that said defendant appear here within one month after due publication of this order, and do what is necessary to protect his interest in this suit; and that a copy of this order be inserted in some newspaper published in the city of Alexandria, Va., once a week for four successive weeks, and posted at the front door of the Court House of this county.

A Copy – Teste:  
GEORGE TUCKER, P.Q.

H.T. BROOKS, Clerk.  
jan 3 – w4w

#### **VIRGINIA:**

At Rules held in the Clerk's Office of the County Court of Alexandria County, on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of December, 1864; Adeline Simpson, plaintiff against William Hammersley, defendant: in Chancery.

The object of this suit is to compel a conveyance by the defendant to the plaintiff of a lot of ground on west side of Fayette street, between Cameron and King streets, commencing 76 feet 7 inches south of

Cameron street, 20 feet front by 80 feet deep.

The defendant not having entered his appearance and given security according to the act of Assembly and the rules of this Court, and it appearing by affidavit that said William Hammersley is now reputed to be in sympathy with the Southern rebellion, and upwards of two years ago voluntarily left his usual place of abode in the county of Alexandria, where he last theretofore resided, and went out of the reach of personal service of civil process issuing from said county, and has so ever since remained and still so remains – *It is ordered*, that said defendant appear here within one month after due publication of this order, and do what is necessary to protect his interest in this suit; and that a copy of this order be forthwith inserted in the Virginia State Journal, a newspaper published in the City of Alexandria, once a week for four successive weeks, and posted at the front door of the Court House of this County.

A Copy – Teste:

S. FERGUSON BEACH, P.Q.

JEFFERSON TACEY, Clerk

dec 30 - w4w

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SIMPLICITY & PERFECTION COMBINED.

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But in a more especial manner do we solicit the patronage of

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## Endnotes

- 1 William Holland was an African-American who was born free circa 1810-20. He owned a small farm near Accotink. According to neighbor Paul Hillman Troth, "Holland was a smart, intelligent black man. His mother belonged to General Washington." For more information on Holland and other residents of Fairfax County see Edith Moore Sprouse, *Fairfax County in 1860: A Collective Biography*, unpublished mss (Fairfax, VA: Virginia Room, Fairfax City Regional Library, 1996), 949.
- 2 Carroll Prison was one of two buildings that made up the Old Capitol Prison in Washington, DC. The building known as Old Capitol was on the corner of Pennsylvania Ave and East 1<sup>st</sup> Street. Carroll Prison was on the corner of Maryland Avenue and East 1<sup>st</sup> Street. For more information see a period article written by Col. N.T. Colby, prison commander, transcribed on [www.civilwarhome.com/oldcapitolprison.htm](http://www.civilwarhome.com/oldcapitolprison.htm).
- 3 West End is/was a suburb of Alexandria. It was a large thriving community named for the West family. By 1907 it was one of the most important settlements in the county, with several industries and 400-500 citizens. *Fairfax County in Virginia: Being a Random Selection From Some Rare Sources Relative to the County's Historic Development, As Described in Statue, Gazetteer, Atlas and Directory, 1742-1973* (Fairfax, VA: Office of Comprehensive Planning, Fairfax County, 1974), 72-173.
- 4 U.L. stands for Union League, an organization of men in the Woodlawn/Accotink area who remained loyal to the Union cause. According to Civil War historian Don Hakenson, this group was apparently unique to this particular area.
- 5 William Holsapple was a physician who moved to Alexandria from Burke's Station in 1863. By 1866 he had returned to New York, where he was born. Sprouse, 1860, 954.
- 6 John Hauxhurst was a miller and machinist who lived on Difficult Run before the war. From 1861-1863 he was a member of the Virginia Assembly, which met in Alexandria during that time period. Sprouse, 1860, 909.
- 7 The Black Swan was Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield, an American singer who was born a slave circa 1817 in Natchez, Mississippi. Elizabeth gave her first public concert in Buffalo in 1851. Two years later she traveled to England, where she was wildly popular. She even performed for Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace. In July 1854, Greenfield returned to America and settled in Philadelphia. She continued to give occasional concerts and taught vocal lessons. See [www.britannica.com/eb/article-9105743/Elizabeth-Taylor-Greenfield](http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9105743/Elizabeth-Taylor-Greenfield).
- 8 Marion Harland, *Alone* (Richmond, VA: A. Morris, 1854).
- 9 Elizabeth T. Mason and E.E. Mason were married on December 20, 1854 in Eastport, Maine. *Fairfax Herald*, December 30, 1904, 3.
- 10 Many thanks to Katrina Krempasky, Circuit Court Archives, who verified that February 15 was indeed a court date, i.e., a Court of the Quarterly Session.
- 11 Anna Wright, daughter of Thomas and Sarah Wright of Gray's Hill, married Walter

- Walton, son of David Walton of Walnut Hill. The wedding took place at Gray's Hill. See Dorothy Troth Muir, *Potomac Interlude: The Story of the Woodlawn Mansion and the Mount Vernon Neighborhood 1846-1943* (Privately published, second printing, 1979), 120.
- 12 James Junius Marks, *The Peninsular Campaign in Virginia* (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1864).
  - 13 The Home Guards were organized to protect citizens from wartime depredations. As the Woodlawn/Accotink area was at the ever-shifting border of Union and Confederate lines, local residents suffered raids from both sides. They were also preyed upon by lawbreakers who took advantage of the upheaval caused by the war.
  - 14 John Esten Cooke, *The Last of the Foresters, or, Humors on the Border; A Story of the Old Virginia Frontier* (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1856).
  - 15 Daniel Williamson was an illiterate boatman, who was 27 and living with his parents in 1860. In 1867 he was mortally wounded after a fight with another man, who shot him in the head and back. He survived and was buried at Pohick Church in 1887. Sprouse, 1860, 2156.
  - 16 Jacob M. Troth was the son of Jacob Troth of Camden, New Jersey, the partner in Troth-Gillingham who purchased Woodlawn estate from Lorenzo Lewis in 1846. Jacob M. Troth's brother, Paul Hillman Troth, took over from his father as the Troth partner in Troth-Gillingham. Jacob M. Troth built his home Grand View adjacent to Woodlawn and married Ann Walton, Walter Walton's sister, in 1860. Muir, *Potomac Interlude*, 36-39, 94-95. Troth also wrote a six-page "History of Woodlawn," the original of which is at Woodlawn.
  - 17 The old Mill lot is the area surrounding George Washington's Grist Mill. This was part of Woodlawn plantation when it was sold to Troth-Gillingham in 1846. John Mason, Eben's father, purchased Paul Hillman Troth's share of the estate in 1850 (FCDB O3: 361-365). On November 4, 1864, John Mason sold his son Eben 113 acres, 2 rods, and 7 poles of his land for \$2500 (FCDB E4: 202-204). This included the site of Washington's mill, which had collapsed in 1850. Muir, *Potomac Interlude*, 60.
  - 18 Rebecca Kirby Marders owned La Grange, a 276-acre estate on Old Colchester Road south of Pohick Church. Her husband James voted against secession, but was arrested on suspicion of being a Confederate spy in 1863 and sent to Old Capitol Prison. Both are buried at La Grange. Sprouse, 1860, 1281.
  - 19 Courtland Lukens owned the adjoining farm, Engleside, to the north.
  - 20 John B. Troth was the first cousin of Paul Hillman Troth and Jacob M. Troth. John Troth's father William was Jacob Troth Sr.'s brother. Family papers in possession of the author.
  - 21 Chalkley Gillingham was a principal Gillingham partner in Troth-Gillingham. He and his uncle Joseph Gillingham negotiated the purchase of the Woodlawn tract. Chalkley lived at Vernondale, where he ran an award-winning orchard. For more information see *The Journal of Chalkley Gillingham: Friend in the Midst of Civil*

*War* (Privately published: Alexandria Monthly Meeting, circa 1990); Muir, *op. cit.*

- 22 This might be his sister, Annie N. Mason, who married George McCullough at Woodlawn in 1873, when she was 28. Sprouse, 1860, 1301.
- 23 Rachel Mason, February 28, 1810–April 28, 1889, was born in Maine. Sprouse, 1860, 1301.
- 24 There is no record of anyone with the last name Hollang in Fairfax County in 1864. Mason may have meant to write Holland. He always refers to William Holland as William, never Bill, so this may be Holland's twelve-year-old son of the same name, who was known as Bill or Billy. At some point during the war, Billy was taken by Confederate soldiers. He returned to the area and became an itinerant butcher. See Joan Gibbs Lyon, "The Home Place," *Yearbook: The Historical Society of Fairfax County, Virginia, Vol. 9*, (Fairfax, VA: The Historical Society of Fairfax County, Virginia, Inc., 1965), 75-76.
- 25 Paul Hillman Troth (1818-1883) was referred to as Hillman, never Paul. After selling his share of the Woodlawn estate in 1850 (FCDB O3: 361-365), Hillman and his family moved to Accotink, where he operated the mill. Troth was taken prisoner twice by the Confederates and jailed briefly in Richmond. Muir, *Potomac Interlude*, 108.
- 26 Fanny is a horse.
- 27 Robert Pettitt commanded the Home Guard at Accotink in 1862 and oversaw the elections at the Accotink precinct in 1863 and 1864. In June of 1864 the court found Pettitt to be the father of Amanda Mero's illegitimate child. He was ordered to pay Miss Mero an annual fee of \$50 until the child reached the age of 7. Sprouse, 1860, 1546.
- 28 Thanks again to Katrina Krempasky for verifying that May 16, 1864, was indeed a court date.
- 29 According to Krempasky, this was a court date, although there wasn't really anything known as a levy court. However, the business discussed on this day had much to do with taxes. She notes that there was a petition by various citizens regarding the Remission of State Sales Tax based on the ordinances of the Constitutional Convention adopted April 18, 1864 entitled "An Ordinance for providing for the remission of taxes in certain cases." Also at this court session a committee was formed to adjust the County Levy. This committee included E.E. Mason. *County of Fairfax Minute Book 1863* (Fairfax, VA: County of Fairfax Circuit Court Archives), 75-76.
- 30 See endnote 27 regarding Robert Pettitt.
- 31 During the Civil War, the Virginia Theological Seminary was converted into a hospital for wounded soldiers. Slough General Hospital was constructed for the same purpose and named for Brigadier General John P. Slough, military governor of Alexandria from August 1862 to July 1865. At the end of the war the government demolished the building and sold its parts as scrap. The hospital was in West End; it may have stood on the site of the new U.S. Patent Building on Eisenhower Avenue. Slough Barracks were nearby. See [oha.Alexandria.gov/](http://oha.Alexandria.gov/)

- archaeology and oha.Alexandria.gov/archaeology/fort ward for more information.
- 32 "The Rebel Guerillas have at last paid us a visit. Last fourth day they went into our field next to Truax's and took all the horses, but the men pursued them so hard that they got cornered up and abandoned them and ran for the woods and escaped." Gillingham, *Journal*, 23.
- 33 "A large army of Rebels crossed the Potomack into Maryland and are fighting and destroying railroads and other property north of the City of Washington." Gillingham, *Journal*, 23.
- 34 Lewis Quander was a mulatto, born circa 1825. In 1853 he bought 28 acres from Charles Gillingham and built his farm, Brookdale. Quander's son Thomas married William Holland's daughter Lucy in 1890. Sprouse, *1860*, 1599. The Quanders were an important local family. Quander Road is named for them.
- 35 "Today we had another Rebel raid upon Woodlawn for horses. They passed through our place on the N.W.; shooting several times at the house, the bullets cutting the leaves and limbs close by the house. One shot struck the house. We [will] have to send our horses away." Gillingham, *Journal*, 23.
- 36 For a full description of this raid see Donald C. Hakenson, *This Forgotten Land: A Tour of Civil War Sites and Other Historical Landmarks South of Alexandria, Virginia* (Springfield, VA: Privately published, Revised Edition, 2005), 111. Many thanks to Hakenson for pointing this out to me.



*Ira Noel "Gabe" Gabrielson at Great Crest, Oakton, Virginia.*  
Courtesy of Christianne Nesbitt Fowler

# The History of Ira Gabrielson's Great Crest in Oakton

By Patricia Strat

*Patricia Strat, a resident of Oakton, earned a BS from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a MBA from San Jose State. She first learned about Dr. Gabrielson while helping her daughter search for a Girl Scout service project. This paper is a result of her research done to honor Dr. Gabrielson with a state historic highway marker. Ms. Strat's quest for this marker is documented in "History on a Stick," an article she wrote for the Washington Post Magazine in 2008.*

Ira Noel "Gabe" Gabrielson and his wife, Clara Speer Gabrielson, bought 4.65 acres of land from David L. and Aryness Joy Wickens in June 1950. The land, in Oakton, Virginia, is about 20 miles from Washington, DC. The Gabrielsons had been visiting the Wickens' estate for a number of years to hunt and collect birds along a stream called Difficult Run.<sup>1</sup> Dave, a college friend of Gabe's,<sup>2</sup> had suggested several times that Gabe buy some land and move out there, but it wasn't until Leeds Road was constructed that Gabe finally purchased some "rough and timbered" land along Difficult Run. The Gabrielsons named this land "Great Crest."<sup>3</sup>

At the time Gabe and Clara purchased Great Crest, Gabe was president of the Wildlife Management Institute in Washington, an organization dedicated to the conservation, enhancement, and professional management of North America's wildlife and other natural resources.<sup>4</sup> Four years earlier, in 1946, Gabe had retired from an illustrious 31-year career of government service. He had joined the Bureau of Biological Survey in 1915 as a research biologist and became the Chief of the Bureau in 1935. In 1940, when Biological Survey

was merged with the Bureau of Fisheries, he was chosen to be the first director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.<sup>5</sup>

Gabe and Clara met in 1907. They were married on August 7, 1912, after Gabe received his degree in biology from Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa.<sup>6</sup> Clara shared Gabe's interest in bird watching and accompanied him on some research projects. One early joint project, in 1915, involved a two-week study of the great crested flycatcher.<sup>7</sup> It is no surprise then, that one week after agreeing to purchase Great Crest, the Gabrielsons took their entire family to Oakton, and after choosing a building site for their new house, proceeded to create the property's first bird list. These 26 birds were recorded on the first pages of Gabe's new journal, the "Log of Great Crest." For the next 27 years he wrote about his activities in Oakton and also logged the seasonal arrival of migratory birds and some daily bird sightings:

March 9, 1952 ...Cardinals were singing in the bottoms [the floodplain] and crows are noisy and active, some carrying sticks for nests.

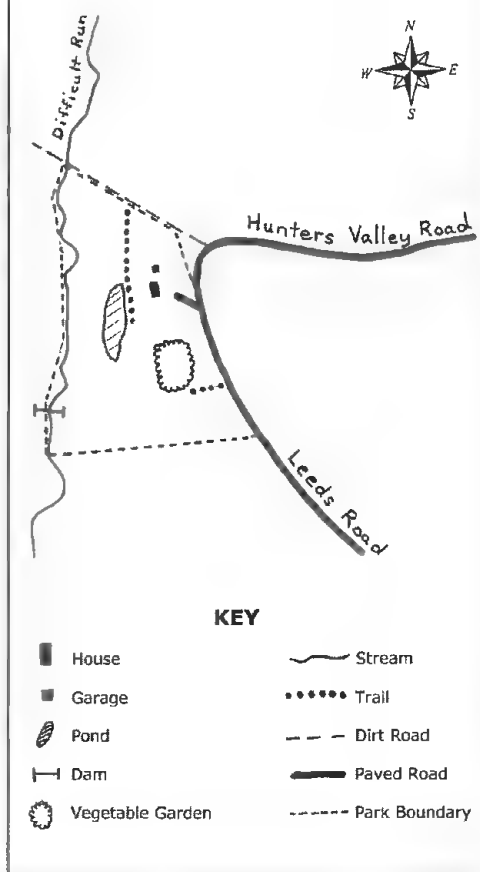
On September 7, 1951, the Gabrielsons signed a contract to build their home and Gabe wrote that "Clara [was] tickled pink." By the end of the year an additional 3.08 acres of land were acquired<sup>8</sup> and on January 26, 1952, the Gabrielsons moved into their new home. Clara busied herself with running the household and got involved in the neighborhood activities of Hunter's Valley. She was friendly and welcoming<sup>9</sup> and enjoyed having guests for dinner:

December 18, 1955 Everyone here. Gail, June, Iris [three of the Gabrielsons' four daughters] and their families and Peggy and Hank—a total of 16 people with us included. Clara had a good dinner and we enjoyed it.

Gabe continued with his career in wildlife management, traveling, researching, and writing. In his precious daylight hours at home he began the transformation of the hillside:

March 2, 1952 ...I started to put out the large rhododendron and Douglas fir and quickly regretted buying such large ones as

**Gabrielson Gardens Park**  
2514 Leeds Road, Oakton, VA



Map by author

**Bird List of Difficult Run**

By: Dr. Ira Noel Gabrielson and family

Leeds Road, Oakton, Virginia

June 4, 1950

Red Shouldered Hawk  
Turkey Buzzard  
Bob White  
Mourning Dove  
Chimney Swift  
Flicker  
Barn Swallow  
Crow  
Blue Jay  
Brown Thrasher  
Catbird  
Mockingbird  
Red Eyed Vireo  
White Eyed Vireo  
Prairie Warbler  
Hooded Warbler  
Kentucky Warbler  
Ovenbird  
Redstart  
Maryland Yellowthroat  
Yellow breasted chat  
Black throated green Warbler  
Acadian Fly Catcher  
Phoebe  
Crested Fly Catcher  
Scarlet Tanager  
Cardinal  
Chipping Sparrow

Source: Gabrielson, Ira N.

Log of Great Crest.

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC

it is a major undertaking to dig such a big hole in this rocky soil. I finally got them all out—having vowed that in the future I'd buy littler plants and let them find their own root room.

Gabe also transplanted native plants from along Difficult Run:

April 5, 1952 I dug nine small Mountain Laurel way down the run and carried them home nearly breaking my back in doing it.

He recorded the plantings in his journal and noted afterwards plants that did not survive. In addition to the plantings, he began building stone retaining walls on the hillside below the house and created a terraced area for family picnics.<sup>10</sup>

Vegetable gardening was a source of pleasure for both Gabe and Clara. The garden was south of the house and uphill. Family and friends were put to work helping in the garden. As the area for the garden expanded, the family and guests enjoyed a cornucopia of produce, including: asparagus, blueberries, cabbage, cucumber, dill, onion, parsley, parsnips, peas, peppers, rhubarb, strawberries, tomatoes, turnips, rutabagas, watermelon, and zucchini.

August 23, 1964 Clara froze lima beans, green beans and cow peas as we had more than we could eat fresh.

October 20, 1964 ....[Clara] has about 100 butternut squash in the basement.

Even before Great Crest was purchased, Gabe planned to construct a dam upstream on Difficult Run “for the purpose of impounding the water for beautification and/or irrigation.”<sup>11</sup> In 1954, additional land was purchased, and a long, narrow pond was staked out in the bottoms.<sup>12</sup> The design of the pond included a long dike parallel to Difficult Run, a pipe system to bring in water from above the upstream dam, and an overflow pipe to return water to the run. After the arduous process of clearing the land was completed, construction of the pond began in May 1957.<sup>13</sup> By August 11, 1957, the pond was filled. It took most of two days for the 4-inch pipe system to carry enough water from the run to fill the pond to overflowing.<sup>14</sup> The pond was stocked for fishing. Water was pumped from the pond to irrigate the gardens. Since the pond froze in the winter,



*Gabrielsons posing by Great Crest's pond. Clara holds granddaughter Christianne. Gabe stands with grandsons Bruce and Stephen, their dog Donnie, and an unidentified friend.*

Courtesy of Christianne Nesbitt Fowler

the pump was taken out each fall and replaced in the spring.<sup>15</sup>

May 13, 1966 At 1:00 pm the fish truck came and we divided approximately 1000 fish between the pond and the run.

Gabe continued with his work, traveling and writing. He served on the Executive Board of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) from 1952-1958.<sup>16</sup> His book *Birds of Alaska* (written with Frederick C. Lincoln) was published in 1958. He became interested in local and state conservation matters and was instrumental in the creation of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA), serving as its first chairman from 1959 to 1976.<sup>17</sup> In 1961, Gabe helped organize the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and served as the first president of its U.S. affiliate.<sup>18</sup> In 1964, Fairfax County honored him as "Citizen of the Year" for his work in local conservation issues.<sup>19</sup> He

retired as president of the Wildlife Management Institute in 1970 and assumed the duties of chairman of its board of directors.<sup>20</sup>

Clara and Gabe decided to sell Great Crest to the Fairfax County Park Authority while retaining the right to occupy and use the entire property.<sup>21</sup> On April 11, 1966, the Gabrielsons conveyed their 12 acres of land to the FCPA. Gabe writes, in his unpublished autobiography, "I've taken care of it as if it were my own and have continued to expand the rhododendron, azalea, and viburnum plantings each year."<sup>22</sup> He walked up to his much-loved garden for the last time in 1977:

June 30, 1977 Another very hot and humid day. I did manage to get up to the garden to check on some things Cash, [James Cash Brooks]<sup>23</sup> wanted me to look at. He picked a huge mess of green peas which Clara and I shelled and we had some for dinner. They were fine. I wasn't sure I'd make it back down and have been good for nothing ever since.



*Clara and Gabe in the mid-1950s, shortly after the house was built.*  
Courtesy of Christianne Nesbitt Fowler

Ira Noel Gabrielson died September 7, 1977, three weeks short of his 88<sup>th</sup> birthday. The Department of Interior's news release of his death reflected:

Dr. Gabrielson was a well-known authority on many aspects of wildlife management and served on various governmental advisory boards. His efforts received the highest awards of the Department of the Interior, National Audubon Society, Wildlife Society, American Forestry Association and other conservation groups in addition to bringing him a number of honorary degrees.<sup>24</sup>

In 1978, Dr. Gabrielson was posthumously inducted into the National Wildlife Federation's Conservation Hall of Fame for his outstanding career that spanned more than 65 years.<sup>25</sup> After Gabe's death, Clara went to live in Texas with her daughter, Jean Holmes. After Jean's death, Clara lived in a nursing home in Texas before relocating to Arlington, Virginia. She died June 17, 1982, at the age of 91.<sup>26</sup> At her funeral, long-time friend Aryness Joy Wickens remarked:

...Clara was a great lady. Her husband and family were the centers of her life. If I were to characterize her, I would use a very old-fashioned, but apt, term—she was Gabe's helpmate—meaning, one “serving as a companion, partner and assistant who proved to be a good and faithful helpmate.”<sup>27</sup>



*Dedication of the roadside marker near Oakton Library on April 21, 2008. Family members present to honor Gabe's memory were (kneeling, left to right) Nile Nesbitt, Sarah Fowler, Martha Ferris, Carla Ferris, and Geoffrey Nesbitt. Standing (left to right) Melanie Ferris, David Holmes, N. Sherwood Ferris, Katherine Fowler, Andrew Fowler, Stephen Nesbitt, Christianne Fowler, Natalia Holmes, Donald Fowler, and Bruce Nesbitt.*

*Photograph by Jack Lewis Hiller*

## Endnotes

- 1 Ira N. Gabrielson, *Log of Great Crest* (Washington, DC: unpublished mss, Smithsonian Institution).
- 2 Remarks by Mrs. David L. Wickens at the funeral services for Clara Speer Gabrielson, June 19, 1982 (Fairfax, VA: Virginia Room, Fairfax County Public Library, Ira Gabrielson Materials).
- 3 *Log of Great Crest*.
- 4 Richard E., McCabe, Wildlife Management Institute, e-mail correspondence with author, July 9, 2007.
- 5 Department of the Interior news release, March 7, 1946.
- 6 Interview of Clara and Ira Gabrielson at Great Crest, May 31, 1974 (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution).
- 7 Ira N., Gabrielson, "The Home of the Great Crest." *The Wilson Bulletin* 27(4).
- 8 *Log of Great Crest*, December 23, 1951.
- 9 Remarks by Mrs. David L. Wickens.
- 10 *Log of Great Crest*, March 20, 1954.
- 11 FCDB 774:402.
- 12 *Log of Great Crest*, December 2, 1954.
- 13 *Log of Great Crest*, May 22, 1957.
- 14 Ira N. Gabrielson, "Memoirs of Ira Noel Gabrielson and What Others Have Said About Him," compiled by Robert A. Nesbitt (Fairfax, VA: unpublished mss, Fairfax County Park Authority Archives, Christianne Fowler Collection), 506.
- 15 *Log of Great Crest*, October 24, 1964.
- 16 Cecilia Nizzola-Tabja, IUCN, e-mail correspondence with author, July 26, 2007.
- 17 Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority press release, September 8, 1977 (Fairfax, VA: Virginia Room, Fairfax County Public Library).
- 18 Jean R. Hailey, "Ira Gabrielson, Conservation Pioneer," *Washington Post*, September 9, 1977, C6.
- 19 "Gabrielson 'Citizen of the Year;' Udall Asks New Conservation." *Fairfax City Times*, March 6, 1964, 2.
- 20 Hailey, C6.
- 21 FCDB 2755:126.
- 22 Ira N. Gabrielson, *Autobiography* (Shepherdstown, WV: unpublished mss, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center), 728.
- 23 Interview of Clara and Ira Gabrielson at Great Crest, May 31, 1974.
- 24 Department of the Interior news release, September 9, 1977.
- 25 Robert Darland, "Conservation Hall of Fame: He Brought Order To America's Wildlife Management Efforts" *National Wildlife* 38(4).
- 26 Notes by Bob Nesbitt, Galveston, TX, July, 1982 (Fairfax, VA: Virginia Room, Fairfax County Public Library).
- 27 Remarks by Mrs. David L. Wickens.

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